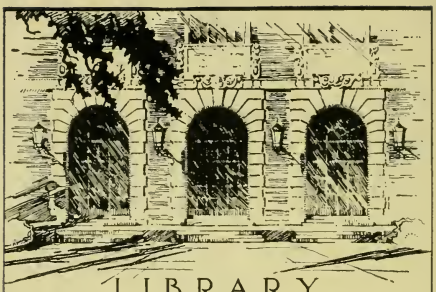

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WEDDED LIFE

IN THE UPPER RANKS.

THE WIFE AND FRIENDS,

AND

THE MARRIED MAN.

One half of the world knows not how the other lives.

OLD PROVERB.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE

WIFE AND FRIENDS.

On est bien heureux, quand on veut se marier, que ce soit par raison : même quand l'aversion y seroit, je crois que l'on s'en aime d'avantage après.

MEMOIRES DE MADLLE. DE MONTPENSIER.

'Tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion.

THE RIVALS.

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THE

WIFE AND FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

MANY people, having no temptation to do wrong, pass through life blamelessly, and even with the outward form of virtue. How such would act under contrary circumstances, can be mere matter of speculation. Of this description of persons were Mr. and Mrs. Montagu. By their equals, they were rather liked; by their inferiors, not objected to; and by one human being, beloved. This solitary feeling of affection towards

them dwelt in the bosom of their only child, who, to do them justice, they loved in return, as well as they were capable of liking any thing, but not near so much as he deserved; for in person, mind, and heart, few, at the early age of fifteen, could be compared to Caroline Montagu.

On their parental affection, Mr. and Mrs. Montagu prided themselves: consequently, their daughter had the most expensive masters, the most expensive dresses, the most expensive governess; which last, by good luck,—for had it been otherwise, her employers would never have found it out,—was not only a well-educated, but a well-principled woman. But even in worldly matters, Mr. Montagu's affection for his daughter might have been carried rather farther than the particulars named. His fortune was large; but proceeding from a landed

estate, strictly entailed on the male heir, and not devoid of incumbrances, of which same burthens Mr. Montagu was in the annual habit of assisting in the accumulation, notwithstanding such extravagance must, in the end, incapacitate him from making the slightest provision for his daughter. Mr. Montagu reasoned thus upon the subject: "My daughter will be handsome, and marry well: I am in the prime of life, and shall live many years." So Mr. Montagu, puffed up with worldly pride, reasoned and acted; but his days were numbered. An accident, on a shooting party, cut him off in the flower of his days. His wife, a woman of weak spirits and delicate health, soon followed; grief for his loss was the alleged cause; but as in that of her husband was also included the loss of consequence, wealth, protection, and power, the undivided claim to the honour of his

wife's despair and death could hardly be claimed by Mr. Montagu.

The death of her parents left Caroline, when little more than fifteen years of age, penniless, and, but for the kindness of one human being, friendless: this benevolent friend was the Countess of Delamore. Distantly related to Mr. Montagu, she had ever taken an interest in his family, little thinking that her friendship could ever aught avail to the daughter of one twenty years her junior. The course of events proved far otherwise; and Caroline Montagu became the adopted child of the Earl and Countess of Delamore. They took the orphan home, promised their protection during life, and provision at their death. If the loss of such parents as Mr. and Mrs. Montagu could be considered an evil, the gain of such friends as Lord and

Lady Delamore very much counterbalanced the misfortune.

The Earl of Delamore, into whose house Caroline was domesticated, was the possessor of one of the oldest titles and largest estates in England, and, what is not always their accompaniments, his virtues were more exalted than his rank and wealth; his fortune he considered as given him for the good of others, not for the gratification of his own idle wishes and extravagant indulgences. And, as in the days I speak of, however people groaned and grumbled at an oppressive taxation, they little dreamed of the burthens which have since closed so many hospitable doors, extinguished so many cheering fires, and driven numbers even of the highest rank to a foreign strand, or, what is worse, to the footstool of power, there to barter their conscience

for bread—as such times did not then quite exist, Lord Delamore was enabled to gratify every noble and generous purpose of his mind, without fear of being arrested in his career by the cold hand of poverty; with which, whatever may be their nominal wealth, few in this country, of late years, have not become acquainted. When he resided at his estate in the North, there reigned constantly the most noble hospitality; which, not confined to his own mansion, reached the lowest peasant in the most remote cottage upon his estate. To make all around him happy, virtuous, and content, seemed the object and pleasure of his life. He was a steady friend, a kind master: without splendid talents, his opinions were always respected, and without great liveliness of disposition, his society was eagerly cultivated, which proves the truth of La Rochefoucault's

maxim.—" Peu d'esprit avec de la droiture ennuie moins à la longue que beaucoup d'esprit avec des travers."

To find some fault is not very difficult, even in the most perfect characters, and those existed who blamed the rigidity of Lord Delamore's virtue, and the severity of his principles; such animadversions were not totally devoid of foundation; but happy is the man in whom only such flaws can be discovered!

Lady Delamore very much resembled her lord in character, only with quicker parts and a more lively imagination. In her youth, she had been handsome, and her figure was still commanding. With her husband she had enjoyed the greatest happiness, a circumstance which probably influenced her opinions as to the judgment upon *one* crime. All others she could extenuate, and, if not pardon, lament the imperfection of human nature they

exhibited; to conjugal infidelity she was merciless,—it excited her detestation and contempt, which no time could subdue, no person or circumstance palliate; and the frail being who, for bread, has recourse to a life of misery and guilt, was by Lady Delamore considered before her who, in a superior rank, betrays her husband, and for the gratification of a criminal passion abandons him and her children.

Bitter and sincere were the tears Caroline shed at the loss of her parents; their kindness was never forgotten their failings had never been observed; but the love which a residence with such people as Lord and Lady Delamore shortly excited, was of a superior description to any heretofore felt,—it was mingled with respect and admiration; and it may be concluded, that their conversation, actions, and ideas, contributed

very much in forming her future character, strengthening what was good, and eradicating whatever worldly, trivial dispositions the intercourse with her parents might have implanted in her mind.

Great sweetness of temper, a lively manner, and cultivated mind in their adopted daughter, added to an affectionate disposition, soon made a warm and lasting impression on Lord and Lady Delamore. Their only and beloved child's absence left a vacuum in their society and affections, which Caroline contributed, in some measure, to fill up; her gaiety cheered their family party, and dispersed the melancholy which would too often intrude on his lengthened stay abroad, and the dangers to which he was exposed. Of this son it was impossible for Caroline to have resided long at Delamore Castle without

hearing so much, that in the course of time she felt the same interest as though they were acquaintances. Besides the praises of his parents, which might be deemed partial, there was not a servant or peasant about the place but who recounted, from his earliest years, some trait of his spirit and generosity. It was he who, at the risk of his own life, had saved that of another, who had interceded for the servant with whom his father was displeased, who was the most fearless in danger, the most skilful on the ocean.

To a lively girl, residing in a country whose romantic scenes assisted the efforts of imagination, such tales were not heard with indifference, and who, without a companion of her own age, had nothing frequently for her mind to dwell upon but the vast objects of nature every solitary ramble presented to her,

and with which was naturally connected the idea of him who once had been, like her, their admirer, and for hours apparently their exclusive sovereign. To her were many of his letters to his parents imparted; they displayed a well-informed mind, and an affectionate heart; the events of the war were described with spirit; but still a melancholy tone of feeling hung over every subject, not unobserved by his youthful reader, and, it must be added, admirer. Here, however, seemed likely to begin and end all farther knowledge. Lord Elliot's military fire knew no abatement, and with peace alone did his return seem probable. Lord Delamore mourned, but never remonstrated; his son's praises resounded from every tongue, but they gave no joy to his parents. It occasioned Caroline some surprise, that an only and beloved son should have entered the army; on this

point all were silent or ignorant; a sudden determination, neither objected to nor encouraged by his parents, had made Lord Elliot, at twenty-two, abandon home, friends, country, all the luxuries and pleasures of his age, rank, fortune, and situation, for the hardships of foreign service in a remote and unhealthy climate. So he had acted:—four years had since gone by, but the attractions of home were powerless, when compared to the reigning passion of his mind,—military glory.

CHAPTER II.

TIME passed on. Caroline was eighteen, and introduced by Lady Delamore into the world. Handsome, gay, good humoured, fond of dancing, not blind to the ridiculous, and without much vanity, not insensible to admiration, she moved for a short time in London, as though it had been a heaven upon earth, with that feeling of enjoyment which custom soon destroys, and nothing but youth produces. And where, for a beginner, she had more admirers than the married ladies could well spare, and

more partners than the unmarried considered the lawful right of an untitled girl without fortune, and whose family, however good, could not prevent her being styled Lady Delamore's protégée.

The dream of pleasure in three months was at an end—the fine speeches of fine gentlemen became wearisome, the airs of fine ladies equally so—the folly of fools was no longer amusing, or the wit of the witty harmless;—in short, Caroline quitted London without regret, she cast few longing, lingering looks behind,—her busy fancy was more inclined to dart into futurity, for with it was now closely connected the unseen though not unknown Lord Elliot; but soon to be no longer a being of imagination, a subject for waking and sleeping dreams, but in all proper form, the renowned Lord Elliot was at length once more destined to tread his parental halls,

—his arrival might be any day, any hour; his parents were in raptures at the thought, their aching arms were ready to snatch him to their bosoms, and then to die content.

Caroline's feelings it would be difficult to describe—for days had she started at every sound, flown to the window at each distant figure that appeared, and lived but in anxious watchfulness for the arrival of him whose approach occupied every thought and every voice around:—he arrived at last, but Caroline appeared not; the day was spent, for he arrived early, but Caroline avoided all summons to meet him till the dinner hour obliged her to descend into the drawing-room, where the longed-for yet dreaded interview took place.

"So my little truant at length appears," exclaimed Lady Delamore, when Caroline closed the door after her; "why,

my love, where have you concealed yourself all day? Poor Elliot is in despair at not having yet made your acquaintance; so, speedily put him out of his misery, I beg." So saying, Lady Delamore took a hand of each, and placing them within one another, smilingly desired them for the future to regard each other as brother and sister. "You are both unfortunate in having no such amiable relationship; give me credit in having done my best to remedy the evil."

The deepest crimson suffused Caroline's cheeks, as she received Lord Elliot's hand; he was in no ways moved, and hardly touching the little hand which was placed in his, muttered a few words of cold civility, the purport of which might be better imagined than heard. Caroline coloured again, but

from a different cause; a reception so little courteous was not what she expected or intended, and she sat down to dinner with some heroic resolves floating in her brain of dismissing Lord Elliot, in future, from her thoughts:—human nature is, however, frail.

The dinners at Delamore Castle were not remarkable for expedition; the conversation rested with Lord Elliot and his parents; Caroline continued the appearance of eating long after every vestige of food had vanished from her plate, but, at length, this employment she was forced to relinquish, and her eyes, no longer fascinated to the table, wandered round every well-known portrait on the wall to every oft-noted article of plate on the sideboard, until they rested where she was least desirous they should be, but where, when once

they were established, it was vain to attempt to withdraw them from the magnet of attraction—Lord Elliot.

From the portraits which hung in many of the rooms, and the description of every one who had seen him, it was impossible for Caroline to be ignorant that Lord Elliot was a very handsome man, and a very handsome man she found him, though not quite in the style of beauty she expected—he looked older and graver than she imagined him. His complexion was sallow, but it gave additional lustre to the finest eyes possible, which, shaded by his raven eyebrows, shot forth glances indicative of tenderness and spirit: the rest of his features were well formed. Seriousness seemed the habitual expression of his countenance, and his dark and curling locks fell over a pensive and contemplative brow, no smile played around his mouth, and

whilst in figure and face his outward man fell little short of perfection, it yet gave no index that there was aught in unison within. Caroline's contemplations, and it must be confessed, admiration, were totally undisturbed by any similar observations from him who was their object: Lord Elliot seemed hardly sensible of her presence, and never once looked at her during a rather tedious repast.

Happy as Lord Delamore was in the return of his son, for his felicity to be perfect, it required to be partaken of by all, high and low, within his sphere; the pride, the pleasure he felt in him, none but his mother could share; but in a less degree he determined to render his arrival a source of enjoyment to all over whom the benevolent wish could extend. In celebration of the event, the poor were fed and clothed, and partook of all manner of rural diversions, whilst

to the higher ranks, various entertainments, amongst others a ball, were given.

Lord and Lady Delamore were so universally popular, that what gave them pleasure seemed to be matter of general satisfaction: all ranks rejoiced in their prosperity, as all would have wept at their misfortunes; and the fêtes, had they been far less splendid, would have gratified every one on account of the donor and the cause for which they were given; as it was, however, it required no vast effort of good-nature to be pleased, for they were such that the most fastidious or splenetic could find no cause to blame. No expense, no trouble was spared; the weather, for once, was propitious to out-of-doors amusements, and within was dancing, music, and feasting, from the drawing-room to the kitchen, more resembling the de-

scription in the Arabian tales, than the common festivity of common life.

All were gay, all were amused, excepting one,—that one was the hero of the day. He alone seemed not to share in the general hilarity, and to stand alone in the midst of hundreds: he uttered no dislike to the passing scene; but his countenance betrayed indifference to all around, or what was worse, disgust at the attention paid him, and notice he attracted. He was, however, so handsome, his air so noble, and the tone of his voice so deep and penetrating, that he forced an interest even in the hearts of those who were least willing to dispense with popular manners; still he was far from giving general satisfaction, or even satisfying entirely any one—even his mother had her secret cause of offence.

Lady Delamore intended her son and

Caroline should open the ball, and set her heart upon their doing so, more than so trifling a subject seemed to justify; perhaps she wished their acquaintance to advance a little more rapidly than it had yet done; be this as it may, she made the proposal, never doubting its acceptance, and met with a decided refusal. Lady Delamore, hurt and surprised, concluded Lord Elliot objected to the partner she had selected; she was, however, reassured on that head, by her son declaring that no power on earth should induce him to dance then, or ever.—"But, my dear, you were once so fond of dancing," said Lady Delamore, beseechingly. "Once," replied her son, "I was not what I now am;" and he left the room, in which he did not appear again for some time.

The ball continued with the greatest spirit. Caroline found in Lord Dorset

a partner very willing to accept the post she was aware Lord Elliot had rejected, and afterwards she had too many pleasant engagements to think of or suffer from his neglect. At supper he was again brought to her mind, for she found herself with Lord Dorset, placed directly opposite to him; and if she had been offended at his treatment of herself, his behaviour to his present companion might have restored peace to her bosom.

Lady Ansley, the envied fair one who attracted Lord Elliot's notice sufficiently to be honoured with his arm to the supper-room, found, like many other exalted stations, that by his side to be one of more pain than pleasure, and that its dignity could not compensate for its dulness. She was handsome, and rather agreeable, but vain were her efforts to draw Lord Elliot into conversation, or worse, observation. Lost in a

profound fit of musing, he remained silent the whole supper. Very unused to such treatment, and at a country ball particularly, Lady Ansley could scarce conceal the wrath which was swelling in her bosom, a spirit which was not diminished by the observations she had unhappily but too much leisure to make on the pair opposite, who, in loquacity, formed a striking contrast to herself and Lord Elliot.

Lord Dorset, though their acquaintance could be placed at no more distant date than one week, yet already felt for Caroline the fierce but fading ardour of a juvenile passion—for he was hardly twenty, and not emancipated from the trammels of tuition. With Caroline by his side, he was the happiest of men, and had eyes, ears, and words only for his lovely partner, who, in her turn, was not insensible to his admiration, attention,

and desire to amuse. Their mirth added the bitter drop of envy to the cup of mortification Lady Ansley had swallowed, and happy was she when a general move silenced the merriment of one pair, and opened to the other a prospect of at best not absolute taciturnity.

This ball concluded a week of gaiety, after which a select portion of the company remained at Delamore Castle, who, in their turn, gradually dispersed, leaving the family but little disturbed by visitors, for the first ebullitions of his joy being expended, Lord Delamore seemed to desire no other society than that of his own family. Lord Elliot was exactly of the same opinion; and though never gay, the first evening they assembled a family party, he might be termed cheerful.

CHAPTER III.

LETTER TO CHARLES HOWARD GRAHAM, ESQ.

" MY DEAR CHARLES,

" NOTWITHSTANDING my only wish in returning to England was to embrace my parents and yourself, yet two months have elapsed since I trod my native shores, and but half of my desire is accomplished; for you I have not seen, nor do I as yet entertain any prospect of doing so; my parents are so pleased with

my society, that I know not how to propose leaving them. When the novelty of my presence, perhaps, is over, I may escape for a few days. In the mean time, let me hear from you constantly; for, since my return home, you have adopted the most negligent character as a correspondent, as if the value of a letter consisted in the length of the travels and dangers it had run. To me, in the adjoining street, or farthest extremity of the globe, your letters will be the greatest source of delight I can enjoy when parted from you; they are proofs of a friendship more valuable than any other good fortune has provided me, or misfortune left me; the remembrance of which has made me thankful, after an engagement, that my life had escaped the chances of war; and before one, I had satisfaction in the thought, that if I fell, (a fate I hardly wished to avoid,)

one human being would drop a tear on my grave, would sometimes remember my sorrows, and extenuate my frailties.

" Self-reproach is to me rather a new and a very painful feeling ; yet since my arrival in England, I confess, I have suffered severely under its pangs. These compunctious visitings of conscience have arisen from discovering, that in indulging my own feelings, I have, I fear, unwittingly neglected those of my parents ; my stay abroad having caused them more uneasiness for a long period, than I would willingly be the cause of for a few hours. The letters of age are short and unsatisfactory ; they do not express the feelings as those of youth do; from them I should not have judged they desired my return. The circumstances, too, of my leaving England, dwelt upon my mind, and I little imagined the affectionate reception I have met with, and still more affectionate and

friendly discourses I have had with my father and mother since. To satisfy them, I am now on half-pay; and to satisfy myself as well as them, my home in future is to be theirs—long may it so continue; afterwards, I know not what I may do. I would willingly abandon my possessions to portion young girls, and found hospitals, and myself seek some distant land,—

> "There let me live unseen, unknown,
> There, unlamented, let me die;
> Steal from the world, and not a stone
> Tell where I lie."

"But I see the smile which plays around your mouth at this sentimental air of quoting poetry: your raillery I never could stand, so to escape from it, I will turn to a subject which, at this moment, rather interests me. Did you ever hear of a Miss Montagu, who had resided with my parents about four years?

She seems a good-natured, lively girl; beyond that I know nothing; for I have not waved in favour of her my resolution never to talk to young ladies. Lord and Lady Delamore adore her, and hourly exalt her merits and perfections in my very insensible ears. Well, this little lady has a lover, Dorset, Lord Aubrey's son. He has good looks, good humour, great expectations; but my father and mother look for greater merits; and because he is very young, and therefore not very demure, they treat him and his passion with the utmost contempt, and talk of him as a spoilt schoolboy, quite unworthy of their Caroline. Their behaviour is so much the reverse of encouraging, that the poor youth, without my protection, would be driven to despair. Every convenient opportunity, I do my best to soften my parents in favour of the lovers, and I hope for

better success than when I pleaded for myself. My kind endeavours are not lost upon Dorset, and, in return, I have all his hopes and fears in my bosom. The warmth of his love is charming, and worthy of warmer suns and kindlier skies. Caroline is somewhat of a coquette, and can assume a prudish air, which drives poor Dorset nearly wild, and he is wretched till her smiles re-appear.

"His pains, however, are not very lasting; and *la petite*, being any thing but sentimental, and very fond of laughing, the first lively air or cheerful remark banishes her factitious manners, and restores her to her natural gay self, and Dorset, consequently, to his equally good spirits. In my next, I hope I shall have to announce their marriage. My parents say, will such love as Lord Dorset's last? It is too sudden! too juvenile! too violent! Alas! how are the

suspicious calculations of age ever to be satisfied? it is such cruel kindness that would freeze up all affection, and break or render callous the heart!

"The newspapers will have told you of the festivities which have lately taken place here: it was in my honour these fêtes were instituted; but, unlike those of old, I alone was the victim immolated. To describe to you the misery I endured is impossible, and it gained nothing. I could not dance with the women, drink with the men, talk with the wise, or laugh with the foolish; consequently I was the most unpopular man alive. Whatever may be my other deficiencies, I am not deaf, and I heard some not very flattering comparisons drawn between the old and the young Lord, in which I fared but ill, and my father's merits, if it were possible to exalt them higher than they most justly are, seemed

to gain by the *ungracious* manners of his son, for *ungracious* was the softest epithet I was deemed worthy of—a crime which seemed of a far blacker dye than any against which laws human or divine are instituted. It seemed indeed generally understood, (particularly amongst the unmarried young ladies,) that a fortunate storm, which should have carried me to the bottom of the sea instead of to my native shores, would have been a common benefit to myself, my family, and the whole community. With the lower orders I had better fortune; it was impossible not to be pleased, seeing them so happy, and I did my best to show them I partook of their feelings; still, I think, my success was more owing to their good-nature than any effort of my own.

"I think my letter must have well nigh wearied you; yet, before I conclude, I must tell you, what I know

you, as a great patron of the chase, will be pleased to hear, I am going to commence fox-hunter; for, in truth, I find, like King Richard, that this piping time of peace is tame and uninteresting to one used to the hazards, activity, and enterprise of war; and as I am, like him, (though not from exactly the same cause,) not formed for other sportive tricks, I will follow a noble though not a refined amusement, which once I affected to despise, and now I fly to as the source of health both to mind and body. I beseech you, be moderate in your triumph. Do you remember our conversation at Naples, on that subject, in the year ——? You were just returning to England, and blamed me for speaking contemptuously of the manners and pursuits of our countrymen. My mind was then occupied alone by a fair vision—so fair! so transitory! When I think of

those days, I sometimes doubt if they really existed, or if they were no more than the phantoms of the brain. How happy we then were! how gay, how unconscious that such enjoyment was only for a day, and not to be the prevailing colour of our future lives! I was soon undeceived—enough of this, &c. &c.

ELLIOT."

The month of September moved quietly on, undiversified with any striking event. Lord Elliot's time was very much devoted to his father and mother. Caroline had hers very much to herself, unless Lord Dorset was at Delamore Castle. His admiration it was impossible for her to mistake, but it gave her no inquietude; and her vanity never suggested the probability of its inducing him to solicit her hand. He was shortly to go abroad, where she concluded the

boyish sentiment would be soon forgotten; and, in the mean time, she did not consider an air of severity necessary to repulse a youth whose only conversation with her was on the topics of his gun, his horse, and his dog, mingled with the more animated, though not more intellectual details of poachers and deer-stealers. The event proved, as is not a very common case with young ladies of eighteen, that she had somewhat under-rated the love of her admirer. The person to whom she was indebted for this additional light, was no less than Lord Elliot himself.

At the farther extremity of a splendid suite of apartments, which were open to all, was one not in such general use, designated Caroline's, from its being chiefly appropriated to her, and where her books, musical instruments, and drawing materials, were deposited; it was

here that one morning Lord Elliot sought Caroline, and, with his usual solemnity of manner, placing himself by her side, opened the following communication.

"The penetration natural to your sex, as well as to you in particular, will probably make very few words necessary to explain the purport of this interview — and even now" — Lord Elliot looked hardly at the blushing Caroline; "and even now, if I mistake not, the topic on which I would discourse is discovered by you."

Caroline, covered with confusion, stammered a few words, professing her utter ignorance.

"Indeed, I have a message to deliver you from Lord Dorset—need I say more? his name must prepare you for what is to follow."

"From Lord Dorset!" exclaimed Ca-

roline; "I have no conception on what subject he could empower you to speak to me."

"What think you of that of marriage?" and the first smile Caroline had ever observed on his face, played around his mouth; she herself could hardly prevent a similar feeling.

"Marriage! impossible! you cannot be serious; indeed you must pardon my laughing, but . . . ."

"You may do any thing you please," replied Lord Elliot, resuming his usual gravity, "but reject Dorset's offer. You cannot be ignorant of his passion, which he implores you to reward, by accepting his hand and fortune: he would have made his proposal himself; but fearing, I trust most unnecessarily, his offers might be rejected, he has placed his cause in my most unworthy hands; and I have only to add, that

I hope you will frankly declare your sentiments with regard to him, and not use your sex's privilege of tormenting an honest and affectionate heart, solely because it is defenceless and in your power."

Lord Elliot was silent; and Caroline seemed very well inclined to remain equally so. The purport of his visit she had widely mistaken; but if it was disappointment she felt, it was not sufficiently acute to prevent her lively disposition being somewhat aroused, by the boyish passion of Lord Dorset being advocated by the solemn Lord Elliot.

As some answer was highly requisite, she checked the rising smile, and spoke as follows: "Whatever may be my sex's privileges, it would be totally out of my power to use them for so unworthy a purpose as you think possi-

ble; and I must with all frankness declare that I feel not for Lord Dorset that love which would enable me to accept him as a husband. I have too good an opinion of him not to be flattered by his partiality, which I should hope ever to retain to a certain degree; though, mixing in the world, I make no doubt, will soon eradicate any warmer sentiments, which would never probably have arisen, I suspect, in more enlarged society, where he will soon find many far more worthy of his hand than one he has only fancied so, when compared with the few he has ever seen her with. You look surprised, and somewhat incredulous—I hope you do not judge so meanly of women, as to doubt the possibility of a rich and young lord being rejected."

"As to Dorset's rank and wealth, they are the least of his merits, and un-

worthy the consideration of a well-principled woman; independent of them, he has a thousand good qualities to gain, I should imagine, the affections of any female whose feelings were disengaged. I still beg of you to consider whom you reject; Dorset has power, I am convinced, to render any woman happy: he has good temper, good looks, and . . . . ."

"And every other good quality, I dare say; but, alas! as far as they regard me they are useless; one bad quality I possess counteracts them all—taste is wanting on my part to appreciate his merits;—he may be all you think, and much more, but still nothing should induce me to accept him as a husband."

"You are very decided."

"It is a point on which decision is necessary."

"Then I am to inform Lord Dorset there is no hope;" and Lord Elliot looked solemn.

"You are not obliged to do so, as I could save you the trouble by writing."

Lord Elliot arose. "Your letter, I fear, would be too harsh: in delivering your sentiments to Dorset, I shall endeavour, as far as my power extends, to soften the blow:" and he bowed and withdrew.

Caroline remained uncertain whether to be pleased or sorry at the interview which had just taken place. The gratification to her vanity which a first proposal might have given her, was entirely absorbed in the far greater satisfaction to be derived from Lord Elliot's interesting himself in any thing concerning her so nearly; but this very interest only proclaimed his indifference to

herself. Strange as it may seem, Caroline admired Lord Elliot, with an admiration bordering on love, a sentiment which had arisen without knowing him, and strengthened without encouragement, but still it existed. Her understanding might have conquered her inclination, or it might have faded from neglect, had not Lord and Lady Delamore, in some measure, nourished a sentiment, which the object himself could not be accused of attempting to raise in the bosom of Caroline or any other fair lady—to all was he equally neglectful. His parents were not so guiltless, and Caroline, from their conversation, soon knew that they wished their son married, and they took very little pains to conceal, that but half their desire would be accomplished, unless his choice fell upon Caroline.

CHAPTER IV.

Whether Lord Dorset ever attained that perfection of character, at twenty he was no philosopher: he received the tidings which Lord Elliot, with all proper caution, imparted, in the manner of a disappointed child, upbraided his friend with lukewarmness in his cause, Caroline with the most unheard-of cruelty, and finally proclaimed himself incapable of knowing happiness more. Lord Elliot, who was feelingly alive to the torments of the tender passion, was seriously alarmed: he lamented over, and

reasoned with his friend, and quoted chapter and verse to prove whatever is, is best. For about an hour, Lord Dorset was very wretched, more wretched than he perhaps ever was afterwards, and certainly ever was before. His nature was not capable of more affliction, and the tide of his sorrow beginning to ebb, Lord Elliot began to have better hopes of the success of his eloquence, when an unexpected auxiliary arrived, in the person of his friend's groom.

The intelligence the servant had to communicate was no less than the alarming illness of a favourite horse, unmatched for beauty, power, and action. Such an accumulation of troubles might have shaken a firmer mind than Lord Dorset's; as his was constituted, however, two sources of grief could not exist together; the last drove the first fairly from the field; the lover gave way to

the man, the friend was deserted for the farrier: and that night, when sleep closed his eyelids—for sleep he did—Caroline's image haunted him far less than that of his dying favourite.

Lord Dorset's proposal caused a decided advance of acquaintance between Lord Elliot and Caroline: he sometimes looked at her, once or twice addressed her particularly, praised her dress to his mother, her horsewomanship to his father, and moreover, presented her with a beautiful Cachmere shawl,—to be sure it had been previously offered to his mother, who had declared the colour too juvenile for herself, and exactly suited to Caroline's complexion; but he was not necessitated to present it to her. These important circumstances convinced Lady Delamore of what they would have convinced no one else, that

a latent feeling of admiration for Caroline was nourished in the bosom of her son, and that this feeling should be strengthened and improved, was her object, desire, and secret prayer. Heedless of the misery which might ensue to Caroline by such a system of conduct, did she hourly exalt to the far too credulous girl, her son's merits, and repeat, by way of praise and admiration, such compliments as Lady Delamore extorted, with regard to Caroline, from Lord Elliot, whenever they were alone; but which, in the repetition, she took care to deliver as the spontaneous effusions of his mind. She meant not to deceive, nor was she aware she did so: strongly desirous to unite her son and Caroline, she only saw and heard what could further her wishes.

Lord Dorset, who had quitted England after Caroline's rejection of his addresses, despatched the following letter to Lord Elliot, dated

Geneva.

"WHAT is most like a man travelling to a kind mistress? Answer—A man travelling from an unkind one. This I have demonstrated in mathematical style, for I came here on the wings of the wind, so that those who viewed my flight could have imagined no less than that an impatient fair one was panting for my presence, instead of a disdainful one having spurned me from her feet. By rapid movement, I hoped to drive her image from my mind, and to a certain degree I succeeded, but I am afraid, in this vulgar town, my love will return with renewed force; here, however, I am doomed, by the plan of travels laid down by my father, to wait

one month! My ultimate destination is Vienna, where, in my uncle's house, I shall be allowed to dismiss a clog which is at present united to my fate—a union promoted by my father, I presume, to make up for my disappointment in that of a more tender nature.

"This clog, or tutor, is called Mr. John Williams; he is old, ugly, cross, and full of complaints, to which, however, I make it a point never to attend, or I should not have travelled at the rate I did.

"I was at a party last night; the women such dowdies and frights! but with Caroline Montagu in one's thoughts, how can they appear otherwise?—if you can live in the house and not fall in love with her, you are the most insensible of mortals; besides, I will tell you a secret, —she loves you. She was in love with some one, and I, presuming on my own

merits and the dulness of the old castle she inhabits, in the pride of my heart, imagined myself the object of some secret sighs and blushes I can bear witness to. The event proved how much I was mistaken—still she loves—and I am certain you are the person:—the sooner, therefore, your marriage is settled the better, for my wounded vanity will never recover, unless I know that love for you caused my offers to be rejected.

DORSET."

This letter, with many others, was delivered to Lord Elliot, in the presence of his mother: glancing his eyes lightly over it, he turned to one from a political correspondent,—for, as a member of the lower house, his lordship had lately thought it incumbent upon him to form a judgment of the affairs of the nation;

and, neglecting all private gossip, he turned to that of a public nature, which is not the less gossip, call it what they will.

Lady Delamore, who had no letters to divert her mind, inquired of her son the contents of his.

"I see nothing likely to interest you, unless it be a letter from Dorset."

"Poor young man! how are his spirits?" for Lady Delamore viewed Lord Dorset with a far more favourable eye as a rejected than incipient lover.

"From the opening of his letter, I should not be under any alarm as to his spirits; but if it is worth the trouble of your perusal, pray satisfy your inquiries by reading his letter yourself;" and Lord Elliot delivered the letter to his mother, and returned to that which, by this short dialogue, he had been prevented the continuation of.

Lady Delamore read the letter with attention. "What your friend has communicated to you, then, you know nothing of?" she observed, as she returned the letter.

"No: and as Dorset is a wild fellow, it was trusting to his discretion more than is proper—I hope there is nothing objectionable in it?"

"Nothing whatsoever."

"Nothing!" exclaimed Lord Elliot, glancing his eye over the letter and colouring as he spoke,—"nothing!—my opinion is very different; the absurdity of the greater part of what I hold in my hand cannot be termed otherwise than objectionable—the levity of youth is the only excuse."

Lady Delamore paused for a moment, and then inquired, with not so much composure in her voice as she wished to assume, what it was in the letter to which he particularly objected.

"If you are very desirous to know, it is the ending which offends me: the rest is merely a schoolboy's rhapsody."

"Is it the person or the event which is so disagreeable to you?" demanded Lady Delamore, still with some hesitation, though less than before.

"Both," was the laconic reply.

"I am to understand, then,"—and Lady Delamore, as she spoke, was forced to muster all her resolution—"I am to understand, then, that you still think of a determination which you once formed, of never marrying."

"I shall never marry."

"My dear Elliot, you are not serious, or you know not on what you resolve."

"Am I, Madam, so apt to be jocose, that on such a subject I should be suspected of levity? and as to not having given my determination due considera-

tion, it was formed years ago, since which time no idea of relaxing my resolve has ever entered my mind."

"Then the sooner your superior sense shows you the folly of such a resolve the better, both as regards yourself and your family." Lady Delamore spoke decidedly, and in a manner which convinced her son that, however accident had produced its commencement, his mother was determined not easily to let the conversation close.

"The reasonableness of my determination, like every other action of man, may meet with far from general approbation; but, my dear mother, without discussing that point, let us have done with the subject — which once, and I tremble to think it, nearly severed our union for ever — never, I implore, let us encounter the same risk?"

"God forbid we ever should!—still

Elliot, I am your mother, and, what is of more importance, your friend and well-wisher;—I do not want to argue with you, but to advise—and, without being more desirous than is becoming, I must confess—and I should think our wishes might have influence—your father and myself would like to see you married. In the course of events, our lives cannot be prolonged very long; and how sad will be our deaths, if we leave him we love best on earth, to a life of solitude and discontent, pertinaciously adhering to a resolve formed in a moment of disappointment, and thus deprived of experiencing the happiness to be derived from the most amiable and rational of all unions!"

"And would marriage make my life less discontented, less unhappy?" inquired Lord Elliot.

"It would be a source of interest,

which must become one of happiness."

"Yes, but happiness and I are never likely again to be acquainted. Whatever portion in future the blessing of Providence may grant me, must be independent of marriage. I cannot profess a passion I do not feel, never can feel again; and it is not very probable any woman would accept a man without such professions."

"But if such could be found," said Lady Delamore, looking keenly at her son, "you might be induced to alter your determination?"

"Such could *not* be found."

"I do not agree with you. The respect, the esteem of a man of sense and feeling would be far more gratifying to some women—even the young and blooming,—than all the evanescent professions of such as Lord Dorset."

"My dearest mother, a few disappointed old maids may find it advisable to hold such liberal doctrine; but, believe me, the young and blooming give not their hearts but in exchange for feelings warm as their own; their smiles cannot be requited by sighs, their love by esteem."

"Your sentiments savour a little too much of the romance of youth. I will not deny that age may render mine, in your eyes, equally faulty in an opposite extreme; nevertheless, I must say in their defence, they were drawn from particular, not general observation—and one I could name, was——"

"Oh, for God's sake, Madam," interrupted impatiently Lord Elliot, "do, not name the name of so cold and heartless a being. In your eyes, she may have married for love, but it must have been love of title, or family, or fortune."

"The person I alluded to is not married."

"I am glad of it, because then she may live to know what love is. You look hurt, my dear mother; forgive my impetuosity—this subject is closely connected with all I have suffered, with all I *still* suffer."

"I pity you," said Lady Delamore with a sigh, "and have, I fear, to little purpose pointed out a method of regaining your happiness. Well, some day, perhaps, you may regret not having gratified the wishes of your parents, and then, to lighten the ennui of your existence, you may marry; but she who would have loved you for yourself, whom it would have pleased your father and mother to have seen your wife, will probably then have found one more capable of appreciating her merits."

"Then, in neglecting my own good, I

shall, at least, have the gratification of promoting that of another."

Lady Delamore looked a little nettled. "You pretend, then, not to know of whom I spoke?"

"How should I know?"

"Through Lord Dorset's letter."

"Good God! Caroline Montagu!—then this is the object to which your discourse has been tending?"

"Why not?"

"It is a strange mark of your love for her, to wish to punish her by uniting her to me."

Lady Delamore replied gently, "It would be no punishment."

Lord Elliot continued, "Caroline is young and lively; the idea you would create in my mind, can never have arisen in hers."

"Perhaps not in her mind; but I should not doubt, that its having pos-

session of her heart, made Lord Dorset's offers to be rejected; which proves rank and fortune are not the objects of *Caroline's* love."

Lord Elliot was silent. Lady Delamore, no longer despairing of the success of her wishes, was equally so, watching the changes in her son's countenance; where, had any other subject been the cause, she would have felt any thing but satisfaction at the dark clouds of anxiety which for ever traversed his brow. He at length spoke.

"I am to understand, then, that my father and yourself wish my marriage."

Lady Delamore answered in the affirmative.

"Family pride, and fear that with me should expire our ancient name, I conclude to be the chief reason of your wish."

"To a certain degree—not entirely."

"I would willingly attempt," continued Lord Elliot, "to gratify the desires of almost the only two people I care for on earth, but for this end I cannot use deceit; I cannot try to gain the affections of one who is indifferent to me, by pretended attachment. If, however, a woman bestows her — her affections upon me unasked, the case is different. I have taken no pains to render myself agreeable to Caroline; she knows what I am; she can expect no high-flown professions on my part; her taste is singular, but voluntary. Should I, from my own observations, discover you are not mistaken, far the most probable view of the case—If I should discover, that, such as I am, I am not indifferent to her, that melancholy and broken spirited, she would yet prefer uniting her fate to mine, to a far more suitable lot—should such be the

case, I would then consent to your wishes, at least I would do my best to reconcile myself to what I cannot flatter myself or you by saying will contribute to my happiness, farther than the pleasure I shall have in contributing to yours. If the event ever should take place, I trust Caroline will be happy."

Lady Delamore's countenance, even more than her words, proclaimed the satisfaction of her heart; and when she considered the inauspicious manner in which the conversation opened, it had reached a satisfactory point, as far as her own desires went, and the acme of felicity to one who a few minutes before had been nearly in despair.

"My dear, dear Elliot," she exclaimed, "do not consider yourself as alone to derive no benefit from what will render so many happy. I consider you and Caroline as formed for each other, and

in desiring your union, have had your mutual advantage in view. Her liveliness will exhilarate you; her talents and beauty must in time captivate you, whilst the respect you create in her, your sense and character, on which are founded her present admiration, will restrain the exuberance of a lively disposition, and lead her mind to rational and steady pursuits. Do not look so sad, my child; you must throw off your acquired gloom, and become what you once was, and what the husband of a young and beautiful woman should be."

"Husband!" exclaimed Elliot in a voice of despair, "I have made no promise. I must make my own observations, and Caroline must then decide for herself."

"Her decision will not require much consideration."

"You may be mistaken. A coquette

is not a very uncommon character. I may experience the fate of Dorset."

"You are unjust to Caroline, and unjust to yourself, in imagining her character can be that of a coquette, and that you and Lord Dorset can possibly be compared."

"It is no compliment to him to compare him to me, I certainly allow. Pray however, Madam, remember I am bound by no promise; in half an hour I cannot decide upon what changes the whole colour of my future life."

"That it does indeed," exclaimed his mother smiling, "and greatly for the better."

Lord Elliot sighed profoundly; and his mother, fearing a more manifest token of disinclination might follow, hastened to her lord, to whom she imparted the foregoing conversation.

CHAPTER V.

Lord Elliot wished to please his parents; but he had loved, and she he loved was dead. She had become the wife of another, but he adored her still, and in his agony of grief had sworn never to forget her,—to be constant to her memory. From that hour had her idea ever been present to his mind. In war, in peace, in society; in solitude; in his sleeping or waking hours, her cherished image had ever been present to his mind. To tear her from a heart where, even in death, she

reigned, was impossible, and equally so to disobey his parents.

After many discourses, arguments, prayers, and almost objurgations, in which Lord Delamore now joined, Lord Elliot yielded. One argument of his father's was conclusive; that, situated as he was, his remaining unmarried was impossible, unless he possessed a less share of family feeling, and a greater portion of egotism, than was the common share of very indifferent specimens of human nature.

A visit in a distant part of the country had happily, or unhappily, kept Caroline in ignorance of what was passing at home. The following letter, however, lying upon her table on her arrival, was a very sufficient elucidation.

"GREAT as your surprise may be at receiving a letter from me, your asto-

nishment will but increase when you know its purport, and I hardly know what apology to make for the apparent vanity and presumption I am about to be guilty of.

"From the unreserved intercourse in which you live with my father and mother, I should think it most probable you are aware of the wish they indulge of seeing me married; perhaps you are also not ignorant, whom it is their desire, through my means, to embrace as their daughter-in-law. To speak, however, in plain terms, which are more suited to my character and your disposition; if you, not regarding the few opportunities which our acquaintance and my reserve have afforded me, of paying you those attentions most young ladies consider the prelude to a proposal; if from what the world and my family pronounce me, you think it would be in my power to

render you happy in marriage, and would accept one, who has little to recommend him, but being the son of Lord and Lady Delamore; if such should be the case, and you return a favourable answer to this letter, you will confer the highest honour upon,

Yours, &c.

ELLIOT."

It would be impossible to paint Caroline's extreme surprise at the reception of the above letter; she read and re-read it several times, before she could entirely credit, that what she held in her hand, was a proposal of marriage from Lord Elliot, from the man she loved and admired more than any one else; and yet, though such an event was what she looked forward to as almost too great happiness for her ever to attain, yet, now it actually took place, she felt her

satisfaction was like all worldly satisfaction, of a chequered character; in fact, Caroline felt, and a burning blush crossed her cheeks that Lord Elliot's letter was a proposal of marriage, not a declaration of love. But, thought Caroline, what but liking me can make him desire to marry me? he is a man to form his own opinions, and to act upon them, supposing his parents had wished to influence his choice, which is highly improbable; to see him married is the desire of their life; and though I make no doubt they prefer me to a stranger, yet any daughter-in-law would be acceptable rather than none. Men of superior minds, they say, are guided by reason, not passion; in this respect, therefore, as well as in every other, how greatly superior Elliot is to me. I have never attempted to restrain my admiration of him, and am now

dissatisfied he is superior to that trifling which men of less intrinsic merit are obliged to have recourse to, when they wish to please; and that he does me also the honour of supposing me capable of appreciating his merits without having to call in aid the high-flown language of romance. With these reflections, Caroline's mind became sufficiently composed to repair to Lady Delamore, for the purpose of consulting her on the answer to be sent.

It is not impossible that a little encouragement might have induced Caroline, if not to reject entirely, at least from the indifference rather too apparent in the proposal, to demand time to consider of it. No opening did Lady Delamore afford for hinting at even the possibility of such a measure. Her satisfaction, her congratulations, the kindness of her expressions, the joy which

danced in her eye; the ecstasies of her lord, the delight of the servants; all bewildered the imagination of Caroline. Her half-formed project of rejecting Lord Elliot vanished from her mind; the contagion of bliss affected her, and for a very short time she thought herself the happiest of women, in the arms of those who were to be her parents, who had so well acted the part towards her without the name, and who now, calling her by the endearing title of daughter, thanked heaven for having bestowed such a blessing upon them.

Lord Elliot was not a sharer of the general joy; and many hours after the time in which his letter was read, did he return from his morning's ride, to receive the answer. Infinite composure did he manifest at the favourable result, which tone of feeling did not abandon him in his first interview with Caroline, in the

character of a lover. Her feelings were very different; and excepting being aware that he took her hand, and spoke a few words, she was much too agitated to know their sense, or whether her hand was not more warmly held than at the first time she ever saw him.

The interview took place just before dinner, where they were joined by a neighbouring family, part of which consisted in a forward boy of fourteen, who declaimed so eloquently on hunting and shooting, no one else of the party had cause to utter a word; a subject of congratulation to Caroline, who felt herself quite incapable of bearing any part in conversation. For this reason she bore no enmity to the youth, who thrust himself into the chair by her side, much to Lady Delamore's annoyance, who made some attempts to remove him in favour of her son; neither of the parties most

interested affording her any encouragement, she was obliged to desist.

Caroline's disposition was lively and little prone to view the dark side of any prospect. Nevertheless, it required several days, perhaps more, to satisfy herself that she had not been precipitate in accepting Lord Elliot. Her acquaintance with him had been short, and her knowledge of his character depended entirely upon the opinion of others; to be sure, that opinion was highly favourable. It was the good opinion of his parents which had prejudiced her most in his favour; but she was obliged to confess that, putting aside the natural partiality towards an only child, they had lately had not greater opportunities of judging of his character than herself. For six years they had been separated; from three to nine-and-twenty, what changes might have taken place in his

disposition, temper, feelings! how little might he now be what his early youth had promised! and an uncertain, vague opinion possessed her that he was altered. She knew that, as far as regarded those beneath him, his manners had once been far more popular than they now were: she had heard remarks which seemed to lament the change which had taken place, and stories would sometimes arise in general conversation, though Lord Elliot always discouraged their relation, which showed he was once fond of society and amusement. Why then was he changed? and if in these respects, might not the alteration extend to points of greater importance? For some time, these and similar reflections dwelt on Caroline's mind; but they came too late. She dared not retract even if she wished it—her fate was decided: it was her disposition to be content, and her

interest to regard only the most smiling side of the picture; which, perhaps, when considered attentively, had quite sufficient charms to counterbalance the little imperfections of the piece, to which Caroline could not be blind, though she had sense to perceive that the indulgence of such feelings would be foolish, perhaps criminal.

Without being a very warm lover, Lord Elliot was a pleasant one. His conversation, when he chose to exert himself, was agreeable and sensible: he had read and seen much, and detailed what he knew with exactitude and force. Caroline had the greatest thirst for information, and was never weary of listening to him; but it required some little art to draw from him as full accounts as would satisfy her; for Lord Elliot, with all his wish to please, and at this time he did wish to please Caroline,

could with difficulty be brought to relinquish his habitual and beloved taciturnity. Their mornings were chiefly devoted to riding or driving, their evenings to chess, or Lord Elliot read aloud. In this manner time moved on, without either party manifesting any violent impatience for the arrival of that period which would unite them for ever.

Their approaching marriage soon became a general topic of discourse in all circles where Lord Elliot, or his future bride, had ever been known or heard of; and, on the whole, it was discussed with less malevolence than is usually the case when a girl, without sixpence, whose good fortune can be alone attributed to her looks, obtains a rich and titled husband. The truth was, the young ladies knew so little of Lord Elliot, that they could not suppose, with all their self-love, that, had he not married Caroline,

he might have chosen one of them; and they were not sorry, at any rate, to get rid of a dangerous rival in their matrimonial speculations, without any of their favourite beaux being sacrificed. As to the young men, many, if not most, considered that marriage could not take from her beauty and agreeableness, while it would greatly facilitate their means of making love to her.

A short time before his marriage was to take place, Lord Elliot wrote to his friend Mr. Graham as follows:

"I IMPLORE you never again to honour me with the title of lover—that of husband will, in a few days, be added to my dignity. If all marriages depend for their felicity on passion, I and my destined bride have little chance of happiness, which I should be sorry for; not on my own account, for I have long

been dead to the world, and all its joys and sorrows, but on Caroline's. She, I hope, will be content. If she is a woman of sense, and such I believe her to be, her situation will afford her a thousand sources from whence to draw happiness for herself and others; if she is not, why then she will be like the generality of her sex, who try to make it believed that their husbands are tyrants, and they themselves superior to their station, however exalted that state may be.

"Still I should not repent my union. I am not in love; and I would rather suffer the penance of a foolish wife, than that some honest fellow, more capable of happiness, and consequently disappointment, should be in my place. At all events, *now* I please my parents. However, I have no fears with regard to Caroline. I believe her to be an amiable girl, with an easy disposition, soon

pleased, and content with every body and every thing, which I may well imagine, as she has done me the honour of liking a woe-begone visage, which might fright most young ladies from my presence, much more from a nearer connexion. You say, you hear she is handsome. I am no judge, but should rather think *not*, for she is perfectly unaffected; and I never knew but *one* woman who, with great personal charms, was so! If you can conveniently quit home, it would be a great pleasure to me, the having you present at my nuptials. It is always the custom for near and dear friends to be present on such occasions. What dearer friend have I on earth than you?"

It was early in the month of January, that one fine winter's morning beheld a vast assemblage collected in the cha-

pel of Delamore Castle. They consisted chiefly of Lord Delamore's tenants; but amongst them were a few rather approaching to the character of gentry, attracted by curiosity or respect for the noble family of Elliot. The object of their meeting was to witness the marriage of the heir of the Castle to Miss Montagu.

In time, the bride and bridegroom made their appearance, attended by all the bridal party. Caroline's extreme beauty, as she walked up the aisle, supported by Lord Delamore, attracted universal attention, and a murmur of approbation was heard from every side. She was followed by two girls as bridesmaids, whose youth and beauty excited no small interest, particularly the elder, in whose thoughtful countenance seemed to be written, that sorrow and she were already acquainted.

Lucy and Emily Fitz-Edward, the one seventeen, the other twelve years of age, were Caroline's nearest relations, their mother and her own being sisters: they were, like herself, orphans, but, unlike herself, had to suffer more from the superfluity of relatives than the want of them. They were left to the care or caprice of a numerous race of uncles and aunts, amongst whom, rather than with whom, they lived. Latterly Emily had been placed at school; but Lucy continued to reside with any of her more prosperous family who chose to have her company. Her many amiable qualities strongly endeared her to Caroline, who, as one good that might result from her marriage, anticipated the pleasure her matronly character would give her, of showing her friendship by deeds as well as words.

The important ceremony at length

began ; and though much curtailed from its original length, yet Caroline had hardly power to command her feelings whilst it lasted.

Marriage is an awful event, and has that in it which might intimidate the stoutest heart, or most frivolous mind, much more a girl hardly nineteen, and capable of reflection. Her little store of earthly good is embarked at a venture ; it may be increased manyfold,—it may be lost for ever. Once only did Caroline venture, during the performance, to raise her eyes to Lord Elliot, the composure of whose countenance might have reassured his timid bride. His habitual gloom seemed to have given way to a devotional feeling ; his eyes were raised, and his thoughts abstracted from every other consideration than that of joining in a most impressive religious rite. Caroline, ashamed of her

own very contrary feelings, and determined to curb the wanderings of her mind, bent her eyes to the ground; before, however, they fairly reached the earth, a glance from one of the company had met her gaze:—it was so keen and serious a look, that for the moment a tinge of colour swept over her hitherto pallid cheek; and though the stranger's face made no impression on her memory, his glance, which seemed to penetrate her soul, was not soon forgotten. This stranger was Mr. Graham, the intimate friend of Lord Elliot; he arrived only the night before, too late to be presented to the wife elect of his friend.

Perhaps the intimate knowledge of him to whom she was uniting herself, may have made him view Caroline with peculiar interest: he was also married, and the world whispered that his marriage was not a happy one,—it was but a

whisper, and his invariable cheerfulness and domestic habits seemed to bring no confirmation of the idea, though his present seriousness of aspect, and an emotion he could not conceal, gave more credibility to such a surmise than general appearances warranted.

To spare the pains of a prolonged leave-taking, it had been previously arranged, that the new-married pair should immediately after the ceremony, depart for a hunting-lodge, where they were, according to custom, to spend the honeymoon; and Caroline was hardly conscious that all was over ere she found herself seated in the carriage by Lord Elliot's side. The people cheered, the children screamed, the dogs barked, the bells rung; from all these various noises the celerity of four fleet steeds speedily conveyed them; and, in the tranquillity which succeeded, Caro-

line had ample time to reflect on the important change which had taken place in her situation. Whether such tranquillity was emblematic of her future life, the following pages must show.

At Delamore Castle, the nuptial day was one of joy and festivity. But all days, however happy, must have an end. So thought Lord and Lady Delamore, when evening was closed, and their guests had departed; for the agitation at the beginning of the day made them hardly able to perform the fatiguing parts of hosts for the remainder. Their happiness was, however, as perfect as any in this world can be, and without any amalgamation of doubt that what they had so much desired and now witnessed the completion of, could be productive of aught but good. So little does length of years conduce to worldly knowledge!

CHAPTER VI.

When Caroline reflected on the little probability that a few weeks back had presented of her ever becoming the wife of Lord Elliot, to find herself actually united to him, excited her wonder and gratitude that she should have been exempted from the disappointment which usually attends those who dare, unsought, to bestow their affections. Caroline's disposition was formed for tenderness; her feelings were warm, not romantic; she wished not to be idolized, but to be loved; and in her husband she

desired to find more a friend and protector than a lover, who would first spoil and then blame her for being what his own blind folly had rendered her. Notwithstanding her little elevation of ideas on a point which most ladies, particularly in the first weeks of marriage, imagine cannot be stretched too far, still she thought that Lord Elliot might with advantage have relaxed a little of his dispassionate manner, without diminishing his dignity. With no little sensibility and a feeling heart, he seemed to exist as if he dreaded their influence; and as it has been said, one should live with one's friends as if they were some day to be one's enemies, Caroline penetrated, without comprehending, this singularity of character. Open, sincere, and nowise prone to suspicion herself, she could not comprehend that Lord Elliot entertained distrust not only of mankind

in general, but also of himself and of her It created in her, however, a firm resolve, that no endeavour should be wanting on her part, no attention or proof of affection spared, no talent or acquirement concealed, to show her husband that she was in every way worthy of his heart and confidence, and to remove that bane to all friendly intercourse—reserve!* No doubt of success crossed her mind; she had not to learn the power of beauty joined to wisdom, but she had yet to discover that their influence is limited.

After two months' absence, the Elliots returned to Delamore Castle. Their arrival was an event of no small importance to the neighbourhood, who immediately flocked to pay their respects to,

* Reserve is the bane of friendly intercourse; the source of error, and the support of prejudice.

Dr. Beattie.

and gratify their curiosity with a sight of, the newly married pair, many secretly wishing that Caroline, to render the visit more interesting at the time, and entertaining in description, would give herself great airs on the strength of her new dignity, or look as if already the temper of her lord had created some uneasiness. Lord Elliot's gravity was, in the county of ——, as is the case in many other counties as well as countries, always attributed to bad temper. The world frequently make this mistake, and are equally prone to give credit to a constant smile as a proof of an amiable disposition, which habit, art, or indifference as often produce as good humour. The kind desires of some, I will not say of all the neighbourhood, were disappointed. Lady Elliot looked very much as she had ever done: no lingering sorrow appeared on her countenance,

and her manners were simple, lively, and good-humoured, as they had ever been.

Of Lord Elliot nothing was to be told, as nothing was known. Not one favoured being had the honour of being admitted into his presence; and, as it was supposed that accident was not the sole cause of such uniform ill luck, his Lordship's popularity, which had been gradually in a declining state, sustained an additional declension.

Parliament summoned Lord Elliot to London, early in April. Caroline wished to accompany him, for her confidence in her powers of pleasing was not so decided as to make her indifferent to the effects of absence on a heart she suspected of but a feeble flame. Her desires were of no avail when opposed by all the old women, doctors, and apo-

thecaries in the neighbourhood, who, one and all, proclaimed such a journey extremely hazardous. Lady Delamore was precisely of the same opinion, and poor Caroline was obliged to submit to see her lord depart without her, rather than that the hopes of the family should be endangered: she had not even the consolation of reflecting with certainty on Lord Elliot's regretting her absence.

Soon after Lord Elliot's departure, Caroline was agreeably surprised by a visit from her cousin, Lucy Fitz-Edward.

The news of his lady being too indisposed to accompany Lord Elliot to town, had reached Miss Fitz-Edward, in Grosvenor Square, where she was an inhabitant of one of the gayest and most dissipated houses in that lively quarter of the metropolis, but of whose pleasures she was no farther a partaker than

through the details of her aunt and cousins; for, though bordering on eighteen, she was considered far too young to be admitted into any society but that of the school-room, where she was strictly immured until her older but not so highly favoured cousins were disposed of in marriage—a period which present appearances rendered far from likely to occur soon. Her uncle, Lord Gauntlet, entered not into this female illiberality, and his determination of her dining down-stairs, made his lady as determined that if she did, it should not be in her house; and accordingly she warmly recommended Lucy's visiting her cousin, facilitated her journey in every possible way, hired a carriage, lent her her own footman, paid the whole expenses, was, in short, a pattern of kindness, good-nature, and generosity; received the thanks

of her niece with the best grace possible, and imposed upon nobody as to her motives.

Accustomed to an active life, and little used to illness, Caroline's present state singularly depressed her spirits, and rendered such a companion as Lucy, always acceptable, now most particularly welcome. For a long period unhabituated to the reception she met with at Delamore Castle, Lucy again felt the exquisite pleasure of loving and being loved by those with whom we dwell; to which was added, the satisfaction of being useful, which had never fallen to her lot since the death of her parents. To them she had been nurse, friend, companion; but with them seemed to have been buried all her importance in the world—all her powers, all her virtues, as far as display went; the nega-

tive ones of patience and forbearance, indeed, were amply called into use at her uncle's, Lord Gauntlet's residence.

Lord Elliot remained some weeks in London. Parties ran high; and though always in the minority in every question, he felt, as in gaming, that one unlucky hit only increases the avidity of the player, in hopes that the day of success will at length arrive. In the midst of a very flourishing scheme for shaking the Ministers to their foundation, tidings reached Lord Elliot, that a person who very little occupied his thoughts, his wife, was alarmingly ill. Accustomed to see her well and happy, the idea had never entered his lordship's mind of the ease by which the transitions from joy to sorrow, health to sickness, take place. He possessed a morbid sensibility when illness was concerned, whoever might be the person, which

made him think more of Caroline sick, and with greater interest than at any other period of their acquaintance, not excepting that moment when he first held her in his arms as his wedded wife. As he journeyed to the North, her danger was never absent from his mind: his feelings need not be mistaken; they were not even those of a brother; they were those of a compassionate philanthropist. The study of mankind had not been, of late years, one of the employments of Lord Elliot, whether proceeding from indifference or indolence. With the character of Caroline he was little acquainted: he saw her gay, and therefore judged her happy; and to be so easily pleased gave him an indifferent idea of her understanding and sensibility. On the road, a letter met Lord Elliot; his wife was out of danger. On his arrival, the good tidings were con-

firmed; all was going on well. Still some interest hung over her state; and after a brief interview with his parents, he flew up to the apartment of Caroline. The remembrance of the last sick room he had visited rushed to his mind, as he opened the door, and beheld the subdued light within. The most profound silence reigned. On a couch, at the farthest extremity of the room, Caroline lay extended, in a gentle slumber. The windows were partly closed, and the room so obscured, that only the outline of her figure was visible. Her hair hung loosely over her shoulders; and as if the little light which found entrance was painful to her eyes, the slender fingers of one hand were stretched over them; the other, white as marble, lay extended by her side. Her gentle breathings were hardly discernible, and her whole appearance might have denoted the sleep

of death. Lord Elliot sunk on his knees by the couch; the fair hand was pressed with devotional fervour whilst a name—only a name—passed his lips—*Therèse!*

The action awoke Caroline, who, nowise displeased, though surprised at the attitude of him she loved, asked, as she returned the warm pressure of his hand,

"Have we been so long separated, that my name is lost to your memory? —why Therèse?"

The sound of her voice dissipated the delusion. Lord Elliot started from the ground; to explain was impossible; one way alone remained, and, as he pressed the willing and unsuspecting Caroline to his heart, the agitation of his countenance was concealed from her view by the closeness of his embrace. Most thankful was Caroline for an illness which seemed to have raised such kindly feelings in the bosom of her

lord, whose agitated and fatigued appearance wrought upon a mind easily moved by any shadow of kindness, as a most touching proof of attention; her acknowledgments were so animated, as to lead Lord Elliot to imagine that his journey had been more hurried than the occasion justified.

Though somewhat a sceptic as to the necessity of the great care ordained by Lady Delamore, and all in authority under her, who had taken terrible alarm at Caroline's late illness, she had far too much good nature to act in disobedience to their laws, not for her own sake, but that Lord and Lady Delamore should be free from fear as to their hopes being frustrated by imprudence on her part. However, it was a great sacrifice; and sometimes an half envious sensation would pass the apparently prosperous Lady Elliot's mind, when she viewed

the humble wife, whose lowly lot commanded little earthly good, trusting in *Him* who seeth in secret, without whose aid the art of man is vain, and with whom the ignorant are all-sufficient.

Education, habits of employment, and books, are never so much prized as in the confinement of a sick-chamber; Caroline's could hardly be called such, but she was almost always at home, and many hours of the day quite alone. Lucy had left her; her parents had their own employments, and Lord Elliot, whether from restlessness or activity of spirit, was seldom easy but when engaged in some pursuit out of doors, and was hardly a day within, unless confined by outrageously bad weather or fatigue. At such times, it was not Caroline's society he sought; he would shut himself up in his study, when his attentions to his father and mother allowed, in which sanctum sanc-

torum, amidst papers and pamphlets, his door was closed even on his wife. Lord Elliot had talents, had knowledge; he had seen and read much, but he communicated little; and it seemed often painful for him to converse even with his own family. With strangers, his manners were repulsive, unless the topic was politics; then his whole nature was changed; his sparkling eye and expressive language proclaimed the ascendency of this powerful passion. Caroline knew nothing of politics; she could not therefore profit by such temporary fits of animation. She loved and respected her lord, but his otherwise grave deportment intimidated her daily more and more; his presence checked the laugh which had arisen to her lips; and words, that with the quickness of light were no sooner thought than uttered by Caroline Montagu, a glance

from her lord confined for ever to the bosom of Lady Elliot.

Lady Delamore's care and Caroline's patience were at length rewarded; she became the mother of a boy. Great was the pleasure this event occasioned. Every body rejoiced, and even Lord Elliot, as he held his infant son in his arms, exhibited a satisfaction which rarely visited his countenance. The feeling was however transitory; for in one moment, even in the midst of the celebration of the happy event, joy was converted into the most poignant sorrow. The child was hardly four weeks old when the good and kind Lord Delamore was alike insensible to all pleasure and pain; he was afflicted with a stroke of the palsy; and though the vital spark did not immediately quit its earthly tenement, yet from that hour his life could be only

considered a lingering death. It was lengthened many months, during which time no ray of intellect ever returned to cheer his unhappy wife and children.

All was at last over! and the grave closed on one whose object was to be loved rather than admired. The tears of the crowds who followed his remains to the tomb, were a higher compliment to his memory than the most costly monument or exaggerated epitaph: the good Lord Delamore was never forgotten. It was not so much his princely bounty, erroneously supposed to be the only road to vulgar hearts, for his successor's flowed in even a more liberal channel; it was his humanity, cheerfulness, affability, and freedom from pride, that gained him all hearts; by which gentle means, all beneath Lord Delamore were as much devoted to him as ever were the clan of a Highland chief by the less amiable power of hereditary rank.

Lady Delamore did not long survive her lord. From the first moment of his seizure, she had attended him with a strength both of body and mind which, for the period of his life, never failed her: she was supported in her painful duty by the idea that he would recover: but when at length all hope was over, when the grave closed upon the companion of her joys and sorrows for so many, many years,—when the cause of her exertions was removed, her enfeebled frame and broken spirit became manifest.

The attention, kindness, and anxiety of her son and Caroline cheered the last days, but could not prolong her life: she expired in their arms: her last prayer was breathed for their welfare, mingled with supplications that the happiness she and her lord had enjoyed might be continued in them.

CHAPTER VII.

MANIFESTATION of grief is as various as the human mind, and in different persons equal sensibility is very differently demonstrated. Lord Delamore's (for such our hero must now be called) sorrow for the loss he and Caroline had mutually sustained and mutually felt, was silent, unobtrusive, and profound; his dejection was confined to his own bosom, and sought no sympathy from others. The world was to him a scene of trial, in which we are called to bear our part without repining, not neglecting any

customary duty, and not unmindful that the death of the virtuous is matter of rejoicing rather than of sorrow. Such were not Caroline's feelings; she was one, as the amiable Lady Russel expresses it, "amazed with grief," which nearly at first approached to despair; unlike her husband, she had no necessity of employment to arouse her from her sorrows; she had no occupation but to mourn. Weeping and alone, she wandered through the now, to her, desolate apartments, lamenting those that were gone, retracing with regret the happy years she had spent with them, and looking to those that were to come, deprived of their protection, with dismay. Caroline was a wife and a mother: she was not therefore, in fact, desolate; she had ties to attach her to life: alas! it was one of those very ties which forbade the current of her grief from being as-

suaged, which made, to her, the loss of Lord and Lady Delamore irreparable; the link was severed which united her to her husband. The first years of a married life are not a blank in the existence of either man or woman; judging from that period, the colour of many future days may be predicted. The violence of passion is over, and a calmer, more lasting sentiment takes its place; it may be friendship, warm, generous friendship; it may be, and how often has it not been, indifference!

In Caroline's and Lord Delamore's case, it is to be hoped it was not the latter; but much was wanting to render it the former, at least on his part. Caroline still loved; but love will fade without some small return. In marrying Lord Delamore, Caroline had never considered the death of his parents as likely

to take place for many, many years; nor did she, in the least, anticipate the arrival of that period when their son would be her only protector, and his good or bad feelings her sole dependence for the happiness or misery of her life. This period was now arrived; and it found Caroline weeping over the remains of those who had been as parents to her, with that heart-rending feeling which would make death almost a relief. The friendship of Lucy Fitz-Edward, and of her own boy, would bring momentary satisfaction to her mind; but Lucy was far away, and her child was too young to divert her mind from the cause of all her sorrow —its father—who was ever present to her thoughts. The seclusion in which they lived was favourable to meditation; and the melancholy conviction was the result, that whether separate or together,

in society or alone, in sorrow or in joy, but one character pervaded Lord Delamore's conduct to his wife—want of affection.

A medical gentleman, who, during the illness of the last lord, had become nearly domesticated in the family, drew Lord Delamore's attention to the dejection of his wife, which seemed likely to undermine her health as well as happiness, and took upon himself to recommend the expediency of change of air and scene, hinting that her ladyship probably languished for the pleasures of the metropolis, from which she had been so long excluded. Lord Delamore listened without much apparent interest, and believed what was stated, without giving himself much trouble to consider the case. He made no question that the physician was right, and ordered his house in London to be got ready for the

reception of his family accordingly. Caroline heard of his intention, without any great manifestation of delight. Lord Delamore, for a moment, doubted if he was right; but as, in a few days, her countenance wore greater marks of animation than it had lately done, his doubts were put quietly to rest, and the full conviction alone remained, that Caroline's deep and protracted sorrow was more for her secluded life than for the loss of those to whom the seclusion was owing.

Lord Delamore had just concluded his breakfast, when, addressing his wife, (who sat opposite to him, musing on the opening Spring, which she was about to abandon, in all its charms, for the very different beauties of a London spring,) he said,

"As you never went out in London without a companion, why should you

not invite Miss Fitz-Edward to stay some time with you? You may be her chaperon, and, in some measure, she may act as your's on your first outset into life, in the character of a married woman."

"You are very kind. Most happy, indeed, shall I be to have Lucy with me; though, as far as myself is concerned, I desire no better chaperon, or companion, than yourself!"

Lord Delamore started back with astonishment. "Me!—me, a chaperon!—me, a frequenter of routs and balls!—I beg to know, Caroline, what you have seen in my conduct to raise such an expectation?"

"Nothing, upon my word!" replied Caroline, faintly smiling; "but I did not know but that, in London, you might be quite a different person from what you are here, and adopt the man-

ners and customs of those with whom we shall live."

"Such being your idea,"—and no judge, in passing sentence on a trembling criminal, looked more serious than Lord Delamore — "such being your idea, I am glad to have an opportunity of explaining to you what, from your knowledge of my habits and disposition, I should not have deemed necessary. I am not very likely to adopt any manners contrary to those you have always observed in me: assemblies, crowds, amusements, all that is termed society, is my abhorrence; in such promiscuous scenes I suppose you are able to guide yourself without my aid, and where, I presume, my company cannot be your only object. Our tastes are different; and as it is the excess of any pursuit which makes the danger and possible criminality, both, rationally pursued, may

be profitable as well as agreeable. Your inclination leads you into the world for that pleasure which I find in retirement and books; with your's I shall never interfere; be equally charitable to my more savage taste."

"Far from wishing to interfere with, I should be more inclined to adapt my tastes to your's, and to accommodate myself to you in every possible way."

"I do not demand such a sacrifice."

"The sacrifice of what one knows nothing about, is no great privation; and those very scenes you abhor, I hardly am acquainted with. It is a good deal more than three years since I felt that flutter of spirits which a full orchestra produces; or that keener delight which the violins in a London ball-room create. The era of dissipation may be considered over at the close of three months' enjoyment, which brief time has now been

extended to four years. I am therefore quite at your service now, for whatever you think me fit to partake; and will share your toils over Adam Smith, Locke, Bacon, or any other worthy whose works are as familiar to you as household words."

Lord Delamore for a moment seemed inclined to smile, but the smile vanished to give place to a more dejected air than ever. "My dearest Caroline, you know not what you propose,—you know not what you relinquish. Far be it from me to rob you of any pleasure you are yet able to enjoy: the world is formed for such as you; you can only become such as I am, when life has lost all its charms."

"Life!" exclaimed Caroline.

"Yes," said her lord, with some hesitation, "that charm which novelty produces.—But you look grave, Caroline;

you must assume a more cheerful air, if you are to visit London; a ride will do you good."

Caroline did ride out, and Lord Delamore was more attentive than usual; but what he said dwelt on her mind, —*that life had lost all its charms.*

Caroline's proposal to Miss Fitz-Edward was not accepted. When my readers (if such there be) have read her answer, I beg them to transport themselves to London, where they will find the heroine of this history the mistress of a superb mansion, gay equipage, numerous retinue,—in short, possessed of so many of the apparent goods of fortune, as to render her equally the envy as well as admiration of the town.

Hampstead.

"So charming an offer deserves a better return than I have it in my power

to make; and in declining your and Lord Delamore's kind invitation, I am afraid I shall forfeit, in the estimation of the world, all title to sense, and, what is worse, to taste. The fact is, I have just made an arrangement with my aunt, Lady Mary Walters, by which, in future, her home is to be mine: she has had the great kindness, on my account, to purchase a house in London, where you will find me established, I believe, when I have again the pleasure of embracing you; it would be out of the question, therefore, my thinking of visiting you, after my aunt's liberality. I do not know if you ever met with Lady Mary; and as I flatter myself you are interested in all my concerns, I am tempted to tell you her story, which will include the reasons of my abode with her.

"Lady Mary Fitz-Edward was the second daughter of my grandfather,

the old Lord Gauntlet, and by far the most beautiful and most talented of all his daughters — five in number. On her introduction into the world, her wit and beauty made no small sensation; according to the vulgar phrase, she was very much admired; and, according to the vulgar expectation therefrom, very great ideas were entertained of her future prospects; all of which, however, she disappointed, by very early in the day bestowing her affections on a certain handsome Colonel Walters, a man as perfect as man could be in all respects save one—he was nobody! his family had wealth, but their money, alas! was obtained in trade! Lord Gauntlet was furious when the discovery took place of his daughter's inclinations; and he informed her that, had her lover the possession of the Indies, he would never consent to so degrading an alliance. Lady Mary wept, and implored, and promised

to forget him if she could,—a promise, I suppose, she found it difficult to keep, for, after a few months of filial obedience in avoiding her lover, a meeting once more took place between the devoted pair, in which Colonel Walters found little difficulty in persuading her to accompany him to Scotland, where they were married.

"It would be better for the moral of my tale, perhaps, were I to add, that this imprudent step was productive of repentance and misery; but the fact being otherwise, I must acknowledge that Colonel Walters made the best of husbands; and that his family, notwithstanding their descent, were very amiable, agreeable, respectable people, and received his bride with every attention and all the affection even her husband could desire; so that she would have known truly perfect felicity, but for her inexorable father: no ray of hope did

he ever allow to glimmer for an instant, denoting forgiveness: his family, with one exception, followed in the same path,—the exception was my father. He constantly advocated his sister's cause, formed a friendship with her husband, and for years attempted a reconciliation between them and his father —it was vain; the great marriages his other daughters made, increased his distaste for his plebeian son-in-law, and Lord Gauntlet died unforgiving, and neglectful of two of the best, most worthy characters his family or any family could produce. His death was followed by one of a very different character. Colonel Walters, from the period of his marriage, had had no call for his services abroad—a subject of secret delight to his wife, though not precisely so to her husband; he, however, made no display of the feelings which attached him to his

profession, and used every argument in his power to console his wife when the period did arrive, which sooner or later Colonel Walters had always foreseen, that commanded him on foreign service. To argue with Lady Mary was needless: she knew he must go; but to console her was impossible, for his danger was as evident as the necessity for his departure. He went: the period of anxiety was not long — a few weeks brought the certainty of the very worst of all the misery she had imagined possible. Imprisonment, fatigue, anxiety, sickness, all she would now have stipulated for, to know that he existed: — every minor evil of a soldier's life seemed nothing to that dreadful, overwhelming calamity — death in action.

"To describe Lady Mary's despair, would be impossible. After a long and

severe illness, she retired into Wales, where the father of Colonel Walters resided, to whom she entirely devoted herself for the remainder of his days. At his death, she was induced by my father, who had frequently visited her, to join us in London, where we then resided—it was then I first saw her. She was still very handsome: the violence of her grief was subdued to an air of settled melancholy, which, however, was perfectly unobtrusive, and very contrary to what had been the original character of her countenance; for, by nature, she was the gayest of the gay.

"By way of amusement, or rendering herself useful to my parents, who were then, as they ever had been, struggling with the misery of a narrow income, to which was now added infirm health, she took upon herself the office of my instructor, a task which she was

well able to perform; her long retirement had given her ample opportunities of encouraging a love of study, for a taste for which she was indebted to her husband's highly cultivated mind, who was in all respects what man should be, brave, accomplished, tender, gentlemanlike, handsome. We went to Lisbon, and my first sorrow was parting from my aunt, to whom I was become fondly attached. For some years I heard little of her: my mother died, as you know, at Lisbon. On the death of my father, a few years afterwards, my sister and myself returned to England.

"It was the fashion of the family to be prodigal of offers of assistance and protection; Lady Mary alone stood aloof, which disappointed me, who retained the warmest regard for her. Her name and connexions by marriage are still

held in rather a contemptuous light by our noble relations, and she feared their powerful and more splendid protection might be withdrawn on finding themselves united in common cause with her. As time moved on, however, and my sister and myself grew older, and more to require their protection, it has been, as you well know, gradually diminishing both in reality and profession. Lady Mary was not unobservant of this; and the familiar intercourse of a sick-chamber, in which we have been lately joined, induced her to explain the motives of her apparently former cold behaviour, and to offer me to reside entirely with her, in preference to the precarious home which my uncle's house has ever been to me, in point of comfort, as well as actual stability.

"Need I describe the delight with which I listened to such an offer, from

one who, much as I ever loved her, I am now bound to, by the strongest ties of gratitude, for her kindness to my dear sister Emily? The dear child caught the scarlet fever at school: I flew instantly to her, but my aunt was already stationed by her bedside. She watched her night and day, when my anxiety made me, I fear, a sadly useless nurse, and when the fever was so malignant, that the bulletins, which my relatives in Grosvenor Square commanded to be sent, were kept in quarantine twenty-four hours before they were read, and then strongly fumigated. Very, very different were my aunt's feelings and actions; I am firmly persuaded that her attention has saved the dear girl's life; she is now getting quite well. We came here a week since with Lady Mary; and the calm, the peace, and the satisfaction to be derived from what many term a dull life, such as we

now lead, compared with that at my uncle's, is most striking; there, all was hurry, agitation, petty distresses, and petty pleasure; abroad, all smiles . . . . but it is wrong to tell tales out of school, so peace to the faults of my kindred! With such an amiable aunt, pretty, kind cousin, and good little sister, I am richer than I deserve in worldly blessings, and the voice of complaint should be banished from my lips.

"As to what you have heard of my having spirited away my cousin Charlotte or Louisa Fitz-Edward's lover, believe me, dear Caroline, this crime cannot be laid to my charge. True it is, that the Baronet's visits ceased in Grosvenor Square about the time I took my departure; yet, I am free to confess that another very important personage in the gentleman's eyes, who at that time quitted my uncle's service,

namely, his cook, had greater influence on Sir John's actions, I suspect, than poor me; and my opinion is borne out by the fact, that whenever, to the envy of my cousins, and sorrow of the Marchioness, he did me the honour of conversing, it was most generally the praises of the culinary professor which he resounded; so much so, that, as my situation was somewhat equivocal, I have at times doubted if he did not suspect me of having some interest, as assistant or apprentice, in the same noble department as that of which the now departed cook was the head."

CHAPTER VIII.

Without being very beautiful, or very rich, or very lively, or, I might add, very young, but only possessing all these advantages in mediocrity, any woman will find, in the society of a great capital, that which attracts, captivates, and agitates her mind in a very surprising degree. This truth may be no compliment to the intellect of the sex; but, whether so or not, every day's experience furnishes evidences of it. If such is the case, where there are merely the common temptations, and common attractions, what is to become of her who,

like Lady Delamore, has beauty, wit, wealth, youth, and rank; who is surrounded by admirers, pursued by flatterers, courted and caressed? The safeguards for such a woman are, a virtuous attachment, a well-regulated mind, religion, or a cold disposition. In Caroline's case, one peculiar danger existed: it was reported, and credited in the world, that Lord Delamore was indifferent to his wife; and the world, whatever people may say who fear its scrutiny, and however it may exaggerate some cases and extenuate others, has usually truth for the basis of its rumours. Some people said Lord Delamore was a jealous husband; some declared him to be an unfaithful one; others averred that Caroline hated him, and that he detested her, yet true it was, they rarely met, never dined alone, and then short tête-à-têtes were devoted to family arrangements. Lord Dela-

more was polite; Lady Delamore good-humoured; but the lynx eyes of the world detected a restraint in her manner to him, which gave food for the malevolent, and, dare I write it? hopes to the profligate.

Caroline was often diverted by the superior admiration she now excited in her character of a married woman, to what she had done in her former visit to London. She then was not without admirers; but now she was adored. Her talents were beyond all praise: if she sung, the room was in raptures; yet it was the same which had often before warbled away unheeded; if she danced, every one was delighted, and yet four years back her steps had been far more elastic, far more perfect, and animated by a pleasurable sensation which the dance rarely gives but to a very young or a very happy mind. Men, who only

flirted with Caroline Montagu, whom they might have married, made positive love to Lady Delamore, whom they could not. In the gay crowds who followed her, one individual was wanting. Lord Delamore had never appeared with his wife in public, except when they went together to Court. From that time she had been left to follow her own career; he alone seemed to regard her beauty with indifference, to be ignorant of her talents, unamused by her conversation, and, what was far more reprehensible, blind to the dangers which must ever attend a young and lovely woman left to her own guidance in a dazzling world, full of snares and difficulties. Yet Caroline, to have gained one word of his approbation, would have turned with contempt from the crowd: one smile from him would have been more prized than all the adulation which was daily,

nightly, poured into her mind; even had he blamed her, she would have rejoiced in the rebuke, as marking some proof of interest:

" The vacant bosom's wilderness
Might thank the pang that makes it less.'

After a long absence, Lord Dorset became once more an inhabitant of England; and, whether from some remains of his former partiality, or, what is more probable, to follow the fashion of the day, he immediately inlisted himself in the train of Caroline's admirers. Three years in a foreign and dissolute Court, had done all that such a period could well do, in transforming a good-natured, unpretending youth, into an extravagant, vain, dissipated coxcomb. In two respects he was unchanged; by which particulars Lady Delamore identified her former lover: he was not

wiser, though more knowing as to the ways of the world; and with such knowledge, to his credit be it spoken, he had not lost his former good-nature. Though he gave himself unconscionable airs, and was abused by every one when his back was turned—yet, as he dressed well, danced well, played deeply, did not want for confidence in his address to man or woman, was reported to have had all the ladies in love with him at the Court whence he came, and was, in fact, a well-looking young man, he was highly the fashion; and it added another pang of envy to the many Lady Delamore had already caused in sundry fair bosoms, that she should at the first glance, as it was supposed, have made a conquest of such a prize as Lord Dorset. His attendance upon her was unremitting: he lounged away half the morning in her drawing-

room; was by her side every evening, swore she was the only woman in England worth looking at, and was to be seen every day in the Park and public streets, talking earnestly about nothing in her carriage window. Caroline was at first amused, then tired, and lastly, habituated to his attentions. His love, she quickly penetrated, had nothing of the genuine character it formerly possessed. To follow the fashion, he was her slave; he wore his coat of a peculiar pattern, from the same reason; had he found her married to some one of low degree, a distant nod would have probably been the footing on which he would have placed their acquaintance. In one respect, she liked his society; he could talk to her of former days at Delamore Castle—days gone, never to return.

Lord Delamore greeted his former friend with great cordiality, and gave

him so many invitations to his table, that he seemed never absent from his house. Not to be intimate, seeing so much of him, would have been impossible for Caroline, and such intimacy afforded a fine topic of gossip amongst many ladies of the society she frequented, and many in societies never graced by her presence. It was not for nothing Lady Delamore had been so rude to Lord A——, and the Duke of B——, and Colonel D——; she only waited for a good opportunity to throw off the mask. An English cicisbeo was not to her ladyship's mind; he must be initiated in all foreign graces, to be deemed worthy the honour.

In such terms did those hangers-on on all societies declaim, excited by malice, envy, ugliness, and age. The gloom of a convent should be the only haunt of such beings, that when youth and

beauty are fled, and the reign of malevolence and disappointment succeeds, such passions should be hid from the world, and not allowed to fall on the heads of those whose crime is to have advantages which they have lost, or, it is possible, never possessed.

The brilliant month of June teems with gaiety, and every night in every house in the west end of London, (and every other end, for aught I know,) unless inhabited by the sick and dying, during that season, either receives within the votaries of amusement, or sends forth its inhabitants to partake in some pleasurable scheme suited to their tastes, rank, or fortune.

Cards, the dance, music, night after night, occupy the hearts of thousands—but in *that* in which I would particularly desire to draw my reader's attention, a masked ball was the grand point

of attraction to all moving in the first circle of society.

A fashionable lady opened her house for the entertainment of herself and friends. Her furniture was hurried into the garret, in which general move her husband found himself included; her servants were wearied; her money expended for one night's amusement. Her company (I cannot prostitute the word by again calling them friends) declared themselves satisfied; the lady was mortified they were not enchanted; though her mortification was not theirs, but her own concern and that of her husband when the fête was over.

Amongst the many who flocked to the seat of pleasure, was a man habited in a dark domino. Some few years had passed since he was an actor in a similar scene. On his first entrance, the lights, the voices, the music bewildered, and

for a few minutes made him hesitate whether to plunge into the scene of confusion, which, to his unaccustomed eyes, the room appeared to be, or instantly quit the house. He stood alone hesitating how to act, and feeling that species of dejection which arises from being solitary in a gay and numerous assembly. His spirits, however, gradually revived; the scene became more familiar to his eyes; some well-known faces sprung up in the passing crowd; and, at length, a female accosted him. One, who once, but for his superior rectitude, would have sacrificed to him all, recognised beneath the dusky domino, and still more dusky mask, *him* whom she still could hardly think of without emotion. With a voice whose gentle accents had cost many a wife her peace, many a husband his honour, she greeted her former friend. The voice was one of kindness;

it was well remembered, and they met with very different feelings from what formerly had possessed them, yet they met as friends; and though he had married and retired from the world, where she had continued with some éclat, and little merit, yet the voice of kindness is never to be despised, and covers a multitude of sins. So felt the stranger domino; and not all the words which had once been too tenderly and lavishly bestowed on him by the fair female who now addressed him, were half so much prized as this one little syllable of recognition in a land of strangers. Time produces mental as well as bodily changes; and after half an hour's discourse, the lady perceived that her friend had lost much of the gallantry and tenderness of his former manner; and though perfectly well bred, the refined language of a very fine gentleman had given place to a

homeliness of expression, an openness of manner, and simplicity of ideas, (as far as the world was concerned,) which fell harshly on the polished ears of the Viscountess Molyneux, who feared nothing but the ridicule of the world, and dared do every thing but what was unfashionable. The gentleman, in his turn, was not behindhand with his observations; and whilst he traced the progress more of a life of dissipation than of time in the yet handsome face before him, its marks were equally visible in the independent air, and affectation of softness, glossing over hollow-heartedness!—the result of a life entirely *for*, as well as *in*, the world, in one whom he had once, but he was probably deceived, imagined to be destined for better things. Whatever might be their secret thoughts, they were now mutually useful: the lady had been disap-

pointed in a *cavaliere servente*, on whom she had pinned her faith; the gentleman was obviously an isolated being; so, when he perceived a something of *gêne* creep over their discourse for want of proper amalgamation between the parties, he had sufficient *tact* left to offer his arm to conduct her through the rooms. Lady Molyneux was happy to consent; and, thus joined, they sauntered through the spacious and crowded apartments, almost every one they met being open to some amusing or malicious remark of her ladyship's; affording no small amusement to her companion, as bringing to his mind people and things once familiar, and of whom he was now out of the habit of hearing and thinking.

"Look at that lady in the dress of Henrietta Maria; she is the rage at this moment, and obtains more admiration

than any other ten women in London."

"Very deservedly so; she is beautiful. Who is she?"

"Not to know her argues yourself unknown; she is the divine Countess Delamore, wife to the dull Earl of Delamore; and the young man on whose arm she leans, habited, I verily believe, after a Vandyke portrait of the Earl of St. Alban's, is Lord Dorset, who, notwithstanding some small imperfection of intellect, is the chosen cicisbeo of the all-conquering Countess."

The dark domino bit his lips. "He is a well-looking young man, and his dress is perfect."

"It needs must be so, for he thinks of nothing else."

"Excepting the divine Countess."

"The divine Countess indeed!" with a toss of contempt: "I dare say he ne-

ver thinks of her for five minutes together, when out of her sight. He only follows the fashion of admiring her; and if to-morrow any other pretty novelty were to appear, Lady Delamore would soon be deserted by all her train of admirers, Lord Dorset being probably the first to fly."

"Lord Dorset admired Lady Delamore before she married."

"For a country gentleman, your excuse for his present elevation is charming." And Lady Molyneux smiled with disdain.

"To excuse was not my intention," said her companion; "Lord Dorset is very well able to defend his own cause without my assistance. I only meant to give him credit for a merit which you seemed unwilling to allow he possessed,—that of constancy."

"Constancy!" exclaimed Lady Moly-

neux: "Are you an advocate for constancy?" and as she spoke, she looked at him with the most earnest attention. He saw not her looks, and hardly heard her words; his thoughts and eyes were all directed to Lady Delamore and Lord Dorset. Lady Molyneux, after a short pause, in expectation of a reply, returned to the original topic of discourse.

"Lady Delamore, on first coming to London, set up for a lady of infinite discretion, and refused to visit several people, whom all the world receive. I had the honour of being excluded from her ladyship's list. Such airs generally meet with their reward; and when she and Lord Dorset have carried on their flirtations a little farther, she will be at the feet of those whom now she spurns."

The dark domino looked offended. Something whispered to Lady Moly-

neux that she had gone too far. She composed, therefore, her voice and manner, and proposed they should look for seats. Her companion consented, and, taking off his mask, followed her to an upper bench, where were some vacant places.

The happy art which constant intercourse with the world gives of concealing weariness, and continuing to amuse when no longer amused, the stranger had lost much of by disuse; he became thoughtful and absent, and the lady was very near having recourse to reproaches for his dulness, when the truant beau, who had failed in his attendance the early part of the evening, made his appearance. This beau, for such he was in every sense of the word, habited as Hamlet, highly rouged, perfumed, and corked, sauntered towards Lady Molyneux, with an indifferent air, as if to bid defiance to any invective she might

think proper to indulge him with, for failure in his promise of attending her to the masquerade. Her ladyship was not to be silenced by looks, however; and, when near enough to profit by her discourse, complained aloud of his desertion. Pulling out his costly snuff-box, and applying a large portion of the contents to his nose, Hamlet inquired what she meant by desertion?

"Mean?—why being here three hours after me."

"My dear Lady Molyneux, it is your own fault, for coming too soon. Any hour before two is the most antediluvian thing possible for a masquerade. At the proper time, you know, I am always your slave; but do not, I implore you, force upon me hours which are only suited to the other side of Temple Bar."

This speech seemed very sufficient

apology to Lady Molyneux, who making room for her friend on the other side of herself, a half-whispering conversation ensued, which left her dusky companion, both from prudence as well as inclination, to the full enjoyment of his own meditations. To the bench below him, however, his attention was very speedily drawn. Lady Delamore and Lord Dorset had been dancing together, and took eager possession of two places which happened to be vacant, just before, and rather beneath, where Lady Molyneux and her friends were seated.

Lord Dorset, as if in continuation of his discourse, said, "So, you will give me no reason for your cruel treatment?"

"Cruel treatment! Pray, Lord Dorset, reserve so strong an epithet for a more worthy cause."

"I swear that what I say, I feel: I

am miserable at your behaviour, which, however you may term it, I will call cruel. For three days, I come to your door; instead of the reception I have always met with, your impudent fellow denies me admittance, and, laughing at my mortification, shuts the door in my face, which he immediately re-opens to admit Miss Fitz-Edward and Lady Mary Walters."

"On a visit to Lord Delamore, I suppose."

"My dear Lady Delamore, why will you ridicule my misery?"

"Well, I will confess the truth;—I was at home."

"And refused to see me."

"We meet so often elsewhere, that I was perfectly aware such a step was not likely to conclude our acquaintance."

"Was it your own resolve?"

"Certainly! whose should it be?"

"Delamore's."

"Lord Delamore's! Charming!—So you really think he troubles his head about my visitors?"

"Some husbands do; some husbands are—are . . ."

"*Jealous*, you would say; be it so; mine has not that quality."

"Then you are a very fortunate woman; for now you may follow your own inclinations, undisturbed with the fear of his anger."

"My inclinations," observed Lady Delamore gravely, "are not of a nature to make me fear his deserved anger, however jealous my lord might be; and if that passion arose from excess of affection, my woman's heart would not only pardon but approve."

Then with more gaiety she continued: "So you really imagined Lord Delamore gave orders to drive you from his

door? I condole with you on the disappointment you must feel at finding he never thought about you. I alone am the culprit; and as you cannot ask a lady to explain her conduct, the reason must be left for your own talents to discover."

Lord Dorset bit his lips, and muttered the words, "Prude, coquette." Lady Delamore was silent for a few moments, when, turning to Lord Dorset, she said, smiling, "If you will let me tell you the cause of your visits, I will tell you the reason of my declining them?"

Lord Dorset bowed a half-sulky sent.

"Idleness."

"Heavens, Lady Delamore, say rather love . . . ."

"No, no, no, you have nothing to do, and so visit me; I have something to

do, and will not be disturbed by *les désœuvrés*."

"By *les*," said Lord Dorset, in a more cheerful tone, "I am to infer that others are included in the same law?"

"To be sure; but I see Lucy has finished her dance, and, in spite of every closed shutter, the sun's rays are beginning to find entrance; so take me to her, and then have the kindness to ask for the carriage, and let us get home before the nursery-maids and children are abroad."

CHAPTER IX.

Of all those who were really interested in Caroline's welfare, Lucy Fitz-Edward alone viewed with indifference Lord Dorset's increasing intimacy and unceasing attendance; and whilst Lady Mary Walters trembled at his name, and turned pale at his appearance, her niece discoursed of him with composure, and received him with pleasure. Both, however, saw with regret the situation Caroline was placed in; for, whatever Lord Delamore's other merits might be, to her

his conduct seemed indifferent, both as a man and a husband, if not cruel. With regard to Lord Dorset, their feelings were widely different. Lady Mary saw in him a fashionable, gay, young man, very much in love, and very much to be dreaded. Lucy, on the contrary, beheld only a giddy, vain, thoughtless youth, with the manners of a gentleman, good-humour, and openness of language, to recommend him; which last quality, at times, amounted to childish simplicity. But though Miss Fitz-Edward saw no immediate danger for her friend, yet she was well aware that, from a very different quarter, a feeling might arise, sufficiently strong, to disturb her peace, and make her regret her ill-assorted marriage, when Lord Delamore's love would be hopeless, and her power over every other of his sex confirmed. Caroline's feelings were strong, her disposition confiding,

her admiration for wit and talents boundless; and Lucy thought it was well, that one so totally deficient in such powers of fascination as was Lord Dorset, should occupy the post Lord Delamore deserted, and which might readily be filled with more hazard, but not easily, as society is constituted, be left vacant. With such reasonings, Miss Fitz-Edward heard with calmness her aunt's alarms, and viewed with indifference Lord Dorset's assiduity: something, however, is due to the world; and it was a hint from Lucy, which made Lady Delamore put an end to his lordship's *daily* morning visit.

On the morning after the masquerade, Caroline, accompanied by her little boy and his nurse, proceeded to Kensington Gardens. Lord Dorset, observing the direction of the carriage passing through the Park, turned his horse's head the same way, and joined her on her arrival.

The gardens were very empty; but it only made their beauty and freshness more enjoyable, particularly after the fatigues of the night before. Followed by the nurse and child, they reached the end of the gardens where the walk turns, and were entirely removed from the few who lingered in the more public part of the gardens.

In the midst of a very animated discussion of the masquerade the night before, Caroline raised her eyes, and rested them on Lord Delamore leaning on the arm of a stranger directly advancing towards her. His presence, her apparent gaiety, her companion, and the retired part of the gardens, were all matter of annoyance to Lady Delamore; and with an embarrassed air, and more colour than usual on her cheeks, she beheld his approach. His first words dissipated any alarm she might be under. Suspecting

not in others what he would not be guilty of himself, he complimented them both on their taste, in preferring the secluded part of the gardens, admired their beauty, and, finding they were returning, proposed their joining parties. Caroline placed, unsolicited, her arm within her lord's. Lord Dorset, with much more willingness, offered his also for her support; the stranger still keeping his place by Lord Delamore's side. In this manner they walked up the gardens, Caroline contemplating, with a smile, the idea of Lord Delamore being *jealous*. The conversation was entirely between Lords Delamore and Dorset; the two others were entirely silent. When they reached the door of the gardens, the stranger called to his groom, who was in waiting, to bring him his horse.

"Will you not walk with us to the carriage?" inquired Lord Delamore.

"I have not time; at this moment, I ought to be back in London."

"Very well," said Delamore, beckoning his own groom, "I will ride with you. Dorset will take care of Lady Delamore."

"Upon no account whatsoever," said the stranger; "you are much better disposed of as you are: before we part, however, you perhaps will allow me, as a future neighbour, the honour of an introduction to Lady Delamore."

"I concluded that ceremony had already taken place, in some of those gay haunts which I believe you to have both lately frequented.—Caroline, let me present Mr. Graham to you."

By way of saying something after the introduction had taken place, Caroline observed her surprise that he should quit London at a period of so much gaiety.

Mr. Graham smiled, and protested

against the dissipated life his friend had given him credit for; his visits to London were short and at long intervals, business being their general object.—"That," he added, "which now brought me being concluded, I have no excuse for remaining longer."

"Business will sometimes give place to the pleasures of a masquerade," said Lord Dorset, regarding Mr. Graham intently.

"Business is very often carried on, I believe, under a mask," replied Graham, slightly colouring. "That which brought me to London was concluded before I went to Lady A——'s last night, where, I conclude, from your lordship's remark, I had the honour of being observed by you."

"You were much more likely to know my movements than I yours; for, if I remember right, you wore a

very dark domino, whilst my dress was singularly conspicuous."

Mr. Graham smiled.

"If you were at the masquerade," observed Lord Delamore, "your impatience to quit London is not surprising; such a scene is sufficient to disgust one with the metropolis, and with all those who take pleasure in its pursuits, and to make one fly with renewed delight to all the rational charms of a country life."

Caroline heard Lord Delamore with the most extreme surprise; he had known of her intention of going to the masquerade, had seen her dressed, without expressing any opinion on the subject, yet now she found he had a very decided one, not only adverse to such amusements, but to all who attended them.

"I beg, Delamore, you will not detract from the merit of my departure,"

said Mr. Graham laughingly: "so far from being in any state of disgust with the town, I look upon it as a proof of great virtue, the retaining my original determination of leaving London to-day, after having assisted at so gay a scene as that of last night."

"The result of which scene was a very agreeable invitation for this evening, I conclude," said Lord Dorset, who happened to know that Mr. Graham was expected at a supper at Lady Molyneux's.

"Yes," he replied, "I had an invitation, which I regret I must decline; it was to dine with Delamore:—But time flies," he added, as he sprung lightly into his saddle;—"by this time I ought to be on my way to Barnet.—Delamore, you had much better not come with me, for I am so low at leaving London, that I shall be insufferably bad company."

"The very reason that, as a friend,

should induce me not to quit you," said Lord Delamore.

"But you are a husband also;" and Mr. Graham cast a look towards the thoughtful Caroline, still holding the arm of Lord Dorset, whose countenance wore something of the air of triumph as he led her towards her carriage, which waited at a distance. The words were uttered in a low voice; they reached not Lord Delamore, who was speaking to his groom; but they were not lost—Caroline heard them: and as she returned his parting bow, she could not conceal a thankful smile for the kindness they implied.

"I am heartily glad I know who that Graham is," said Lord Dorset to Caroline, as he sat by her at dinner.

"Why so?"

"Because when we were sitting down after the last dance at Lady A —— 's

last night, I saw him very attentive to our conversation, and I dare say he heard all we said;—he was just behind you next to Lady Molyneux, with whom he had been walking all the evening."

"Are you sure it was Mr. Graham?" inquired Caroline anxiously.

"Certain. I called on Lady Molyneux this morning; she told me the masquerade had had a peculiar charm for her, as there she had met one who, spite of absence, was unchanged in friendship. I of course, as she intended, teazed her for the name of this delectable companion, about which for some time she affected to be mysterious. At length she confessed him to have been Graham; but until Delamore introduced him to you this morning, I had not imagined that the dark domino I had observed sitting behind you could be him. From his quiet appearance, I was induced to imagine

that he was the master of the house; however, Graham it proved to be. Lady Molyneux farther informed me that her former friend was become somewhat *sauvage* from living too much in the country, but that she intended to revivify him; that she should restore *les graces* which were at present obscured, and, as a first step towards improvement, he had promised to sup with her and a chosen few, after the Opera to-night. A continuation of such practices, she was sure, would have the happiest effect upon his manners, and render still more jealous a very odious wife he possesses. All this delicious scheme, however, Graham has destroyed by taking himself off, for he is really gone; which is more than I gave him credit for intending, spite of his sage speeches this morning. Lady Molyneux will be horridly disappointed."

"And very easily consoled. And

you think that Mr. Graham heard our conversation?"

"As certain as I am of my existence," said Lord Dorset, as he carried a glass of champagne to his lips.

Caroline sighed. Mr. Graham was the only person Lord Delamore ever spoke of in the warm terms of friendship and admiration. She could have wished for a more favourable impression to have been received by him of her character, than she feared would result from the circumstances under which he had twice met her; namely, the conversation at the masquerade, and the almost *tête-à-tête* walk with Lord Dorset that morning. Neither of these were situations to impress a serious man, such as the bosom friend of her lord, with an idea of discretion, or even of decorum.

Mr. Graham had been introduced to

Lady Delamore as her future neighbour: such he was on the point of becoming. Lord Delamore was one of those persons who convert whatever is meant for their good into a source of misery and trouble. Such dispositions are advantageous to mankind in one respect,—the teaching resignation in their more untoward fortunes to those oppressed by poverty, or any of the various ills flesh is heir to. No sooner was Lord Delamore in actual possession of Delamore Castle, than he quarrelled with its site, extent, splendour, with all that made it the envy and admiration of every other man. At last, he discovered that the great fault lay in the county in which it was situated, and in a certain state, which, from time immemorial, had been kept up in that county at Delamore Castle, rendering the owner a very great personage.

But what with public days and public meetings, whether for business or pleasure, this mode of life was not quite so independent a one as Lord Delamore's military habits or natural taste desired. He sighed and groaned beneath his grandeur: a lingering desire to be popular supported him for a short time; but the reflection came at last, that a good name might be purchased too dearly; and with this reflection came a decision as surprising to Caroline as to every one else—the quitting Delamore Castle, and thus getting rid at once of its odious, visiting neighbourhood, which, with all its humility, required perpetual attention and ceremony.

Caroline heard her lord's intentions with little regret. She was well aware that his manners did not please; and she anticipated the offending all those with

whom the last lord had lived in amity and ease. Mortification must therefore have ensued to herself abroad, and probably an increase of taciturnity and gloom at home.

As Lord Delamore frequently spoke of the sun of Italy and the mountains of Switzerland with a sigh, as if to regret the fate which had placed him in England,

> "Beneath her dripping sky, and fields without a flower;"

that they should go abroad was Lady Delamore's decided opinion. Her surprise was therefore great, when she discovered he was about purchasing a residence in ——shire, a place excellent for hunting, and within a short distance of Mr. Graham; but without any other recommendation. As the purchase only required her sanction, she gave it with-

out making any comment; the prospect which it held out, however, was not very pleasing to her.

Caroline loved the world, perhaps better than any one would be justified in doing, who possessed a home more agreeable than was hers. Not that it was miserable; but, when weighed with the gay world in which she moved, its enjoyments, even to one of more moderate desires, might have been as nothing in the scale. It was dull from other causes besides its master's melancholy temper. Lord Delamore hated all society at home but dinner-parties; his love of politics made him frequent clubs abroad; but at home, dinners were all the society he ever entertained, and decidedly as a duty, not a pleasure. As the penalty his rank and fortune entailed, they were consequently very splendid, very large, and, spite of all his

wife's efforts to render them otherwise, very dull; the company being usually ill-assorted, and the host grave, and, long before the conclusion of the feast, evidently wearied by his guests. Any thing in the shape of evening society was sure to drive him, at an earlier hour than usual, to his library, and to produce an additional shade upon his countenance for several days. To please therefore her lord, Caroline gave up all such practices; but to please herself, she entered only with more eagerness into parties abroad; and, excepting when forced by positive exhaustion, never passed willingly an evening at home. Such being the case, it is not surprising that she somewhat dreaded a *téte-à-téte* of several months with her husband, in a strange county, away from her friends, in an indifferent house. The latter defect Lord Delamore made very light of,

as it opened so fine a field for improvement, when they had formed a judgment by residing there.

The person who seemed most distressed at these arrangements was Lord Dorset. He had fully intended to enact the lover again at Delamore Castle, his father's seat affording him so fine an opportunity; and he had promised himself the greatest éclat in this second performance, inasmuch as he intended to be much better received, and also inasmuch as the Countess of Delamore was superior to Miss Montagu. His vehement expressions of disappointment rather reconciled Caroline to her fate.

London, as it is called, at length drew to a close; one by one its votaries vanished; some dragged by the tyranny of a husband, some by the will of a father blind to tears and deaf to sighs; some few from pleasure in rural scenes;

many for love of change, and many wearied with dissipation. The thinned streets proclaimed every day a fresh departure; but of the few who still lingered, Lady Delamore's brilliant equipage made a conspicuous figure—its echo yet cheered the hearts of the idlers in St. James's Street; and her house was yet open to the few of any fashion remaining in London—and this was Lord Delamore's doing. He, an enemy to all inquiry, hating the gaze of the vulgar as much as their remarks, in abandoning Delamore Castle, determined not to put himself in the way of having his conduct discussed, which in that neighbourhood alone could be the case: until, therefore, his new purchase, Highwood, was ready for his reception, he resigned himself to a summer in London, as a lesser evil than the wonderments of his friends in ——shire.

Almost the last day in September was the one on which the Delamores departed, his lordship to Highwood, and his lady, at her own request, to spend a few days at Delamore Castle, where she had a thousand farewell visits to make,—not so much to the great and rich, as to the poor and lowly; to whom, early initiated in habits of charity by her mother-in-law, she was the most generous of friends—and for the sake of whom, she would have been almost tempted to remonstrate with Lord Delamore, when he hinted the probability of their never living again at Delamore Castle.

Caroline had a commission from her lord to perform: it sounded not very important, but the results were different from any her expectation could have imagined, from her having to examine a cabinet, wherein were deposited vari-

ous papers, amongst which one was supposed to be that which related to the affairs of the Rev. Mr. Villiers, an uncle by marriage with his mother's sister, of Lord Delamore's. To look for this paper, she commenced her search, and was quite satisfied she had succeeded, on laying her hands on a packet of letters, tied with a black ribbon, and inscribed, "Letters returned to me after the death of my dear sister Villiers."

A very slight perusal convinced Caroline, that the paper she was in search of was not likely to be in the packet; but that glance was sufficient to drive every thought from her head but one,—the making herself mistress of the contents of the letters before her; they were as follows.

CHAPTER X.

TO MRS. VILLIERS.

"My dearest sister will excuse, I am sure, my late silence, and, when she knows the cause, will be more inclined to pity than blame me for not writing the last week, which, thanks to the even tenour of our lives, is a lapse unprecedented in our correspondence heretofore, and will, I trust, not happen soon again. The cause I would inform you of is not one of deep distress, but it is one that has agitated, and still agitates me considerably.—You will comprehend

my feelings; Elliot is going to be married!—he, who is so young,—hardly arrived at man's estate,—is in love, and demands our consent to his union with the daughter of a Mr. Greville, a gentleman of family and fortune he has met with abroad. Miss Greville has been educated in a convent in France; she may be every thing that is amiable, and, without knowing the contrary, it would be uncharitable to suppose otherwise; but when I consider that on one a total stranger to the ideas, manners, and prejudices, as she would term them, of her native country—who, though every thing that is fascinating, may be every thing that is artificial—that on such a one depends the future happiness, perhaps respectability, of my dearest son, I own I am filled with alarm. He is young, has seen little of the world, and she is a mere child;—but to that per-

haps I should not object, when I consider that from that cause she has as yet seen little of society; and though she may have much to learn, the more difficult task, to unlearn, will be spared; the extreme licence of foreign manners she may happily be ignorant of. I enclose copies of Mr. Greville's letter to Lord Delamore, and of two, which, though of different dates, I received at the same time from Elliot himself. Mr. G.'s does not displease me,—it is that of a gentleman, and shows sufficient pride in himself and in his daughter as not to be violently desirous to dispose of her in marriage.

"Lord Delamore and myself, having no reasonable grounds of objection, have consented, on condition that the marriage is celebrated in England, and not before the expiration of a year. This resolve cost us much reflection; it is

taken—God grant it prove for the best.

Your affectionate Sister,

M. DELAMORE."

TO THE EARL OF DELAMORE.

Naples, —— 17—.

" MY LORD,

" WITH some hesitation I address myself to your lordship, on a subject which, though equally interesting to us both, requires on my side to be treated with peculiar delicacy.

" Lord Elliot will by this post have asked your lordship's sanction to a union with my daughter,—a sanction which, with the sanguine temperament of youth, he made so sure of, (if he thought of it at all,) as to propose to Theresa, without considering the possibility of your objecting to his marriage, either

from having other views for him, his youth, the want of a certain rank you might expect in your daughter-in-law, or from a thousand other reasons, which prevent half the imprudent marriages which would otherwise take place every day. Of these possible objections I am perfectly aware, and do not write with a view of combating them, but to beg, if such is the case, that you will have the kindness to declare your opinion fully and explicitly, not leaving the young people any hope that, with time, they might conquer your resolve, and thus keep alive a flame, which if to be destroyed, is best done at once, and which, in a female mind, is of too great moment to be allowed to exist solely on hope, which usually ends in disappointment. I make no doubt that Elliot has done full justice to the merits of my daughter; but on one point, which, as a father, I

hold of some importance, he may have been very likely silent, perhaps ignorant. Theresa is not destitute of fortune: on coming of age, or at her marriage, she will succeed to twenty thousand pounds, left to her by her maternal grandfather; and at my death she will probably possess all I have. Should your lordship accede to the wishes of your son, I shall esteem my daughter most fortunate in gaining the affections of so excellent a young man as Lord Elliot.

I have the honour to be
My Lord,
&c. &c. &c.
FRANCIS GREVILLE."

TO THE COUNTESS OF DELAMORE.

"I CANNOT let this post depart without writing to you, though my letter

may contain only a repetition of what I have already written to my father; but so great is my desire to obtain your consent to an union with the sweetest girl in the world, that were the suffrage of every individual in England required to accomplish such an end, I would canvass their votes on my bended knees, or in volumes of writing, rather than neglect any means to obtain what must render me the happiest or the most miserable of men. As it is, however, this coveted approbation, I trust, will not be withheld by the most indulgent of parents, to one who has never consciously offended them; and the future study of whose life will be to testify his gratitude to the utmost extent of his ability. If once you were to see Theresa, my fears would be groundless: her appearance must win all hearts in her favour; and if you knew her, I myself proba-

bly should not be more impatient to make her my wife, than you would be to see her such; but you do not know her,—have never seen her; and on my feeble pen rests the knowledge of all her merits. Were I a poet, I would celebrate her praises in verse; were I a painter, I would attempt to pourtray the beauties of her person; but in simple prose I find the impossibility. I trust only to your indulgence: think with pity on one who loves to distraction a being worthy of becoming your daughter; who is gentle, lovely, good, with sense and talents, and sighs for what she has never known—a mother's love; a happiness I have dared pronounce you will bestow upon her.

Yours, my dear Mother,

&c. &c.

ELLIOT."

TO THE COUNTESS OF DELAMORE.

" *Naples,* —— 17—.

" My last letter ran on in such praise of Theresa, that I omitted all the particulars concerning our first acquaintance; and as I hope they may prove interesting, I proceed to relate them.

" The first time I saw Miss Greville was at the English Minister's, where, on a Sunday, the service of our church is performed. Amongst many other females, none ill-looking, her appearance was as far superior as a painting of Guido's would be in a gallery of modern artists. The first sight of her lovely complexion, down-cast eyes, fair hair, and elegant form, filled me with an admiration which female beauty had never before inspired, and most effectually destroyed my devotions for that day. When the service was concluded, she took the arm

of an elderly lady, and left the room. I followed, and to my great surprise beheld her ascend the carriage, which was in waiting for her, of my most intimate friend Greville. I was thunderstruck; and will confess a most painful idea entered my mind, injurious to my friend, and cruel to Theresa. I believed her to be what I dare not write, and what I can only be pardoned for imagining, by my knowledge of Greville's character: with a thousand good qualities, his residence abroad had rendered him, on *one* point, not quite so moral a character as our laws of propriety require. A certain Madame de L—— had lately quitted his protection, and I verily believed the innocent Theresa had taken her place. The idea rendered me miserable. I hated, and was jealous of Greville; and inwardly abusing him as the most unheard-of libertine, and compassionating

Theresa as his victim, I wandered, under a burning sun, till my steps were arrested by the sea-shore. I threw myself on the beach. A boat was moored not far from me; and by the discourse of the boatmen I gathered, that some one had appointed them to the spot; who that some one was, I was quickly informed; a smart slap on the shoulder, followed by Greville's well-known laugh, made me start from my repose; it was he indeed, and on his arm Theresa! I suppose my countenance showed no very kindly feelings, by Greville's exclaiming, 'I swear you were asleep; no one ever looked so cross, unless aroused from slumber; well, I am sorry to have disturbed your dreams.'—'I should rather apologise for intruding upon your not sleeping, but waking dreams;' and I looked with scorn towards Theresa from

him. He followed the direction of my eye. 'You have so many female friends,' he said carelessly, 'that the addition of one can be very little coveted, otherwise I should have liked to have made you known to this lady.'—'I never refuse the acquaintance of a lady; nevertheless, Greville, you are unwise to introduce me.' He seemed to penetrate my meaning; for with emphasis, and more gravity than usual, he presented me to his *daughter*, Miss Greville. 'Daughter!' I exclaimed, with the utmost astonishment. 'To be sure; did you take her for my grandmother?—But come; instead of sleeping on the shore, come and sail on the sea. Fortune has thrown you in our way, and my little girl and I will not let you escape. *Allons donc!*'

"So saying, Greville put his arm in mine, and led me, nothing loath, to the

boat, in which we embarked. The day was superb; the scenery such as no painter or poet has ever yet done justice to. I was seated between a lovely girl, with whom I was already in love, and one of the most agreeable men I know. Could any situation be more enjoyable? My spirits rose, as the weight of my cruel surmises was removed. Greville was unusually pleasant; gay without levity, which he frequently indulges in, and which I gave him credit for restraining in the presence of his daughter; who, at length, ventured to raise her eyes from the ground, and, inspired by her companion, to converse. Her artless observations, for which I could have worshipped her, rather amused her father. We landed beneath some spreading trees; and some cold provisions they had brought with them, were spread on the ground before us. Music became the subject of dis-

course; and, at her father's desire, Theresa sung. The air she chose was one so plaintive, so tender, it might have penetrated a heart of stone. 'Such solemn music is not what I prefer,' observed Greville, when she had concluded. Theresa coloured; she was very sorry, but her taste had been formed by the style of music she had heard in the convent where she had lived. 'The world,' said Greville, laughing and turning to me, 'will soon cure such a taste.' I secretly hoped not. Greville having moved away to speak to the boatmen, I inquired of Theresa, if she was glad to leave her convent? I had touched on a tender string; tears filled her eyes. 'Are your tears, tears of regret?' I continued. 'They are the tears of a foolish girl, who cannot yet reconcile herself to being separated from all her early friends—from all she loves!'—'I wish you would

consider me as a friend.' 'You are very kind; but I do not know you.'—'In time we shall know each other better.'—'In time, I hope, I shall not want a friend; I shall know my father!'—'And do you not know him?'—'Alas! not so well as those I am parted from. Till six weeks back, I had not seen my father for many years!' We re-embarked; a soft breeze soon wafted us to the point from whence we started. We returned to our separate homes; but in parting from Theresa, her image accompanied me, never to be forgotten.

"A week elapsed, during which I was at Greville's every day, but never saw Theresa. Whilst I fretted at my bad fortune, Graham met her several times, and became so intimate that I was half inclined to be jealous. I fell sick: during my confinement a ball took place at the English Minister's. Theresa

was there, and excited universal admiration. Graham danced with her, and my only consolation for not having done so myself, was that I was the subject of their discourse, and that she lamented my illness. On my recovery, I found out, what I was not very backward in making my profit of, that Theresa rode out very early in the morning, attended only by a groom. I met her at first as if by accident; at length it became a regular custom, and it may easily be supposed, that our acquaintance rapidly improved. Greville, however, heard at length of my attendance, and very shortly informed me that he did not approve of my conduct; that the censorious were too happy to lay hold of any thing to make the topic of their censure; and it might be supposed that it was with his sanction I attended his daughter in her rides. I know not exactly what followed, or how

I declared my feelings; but I ended, though you will laugh, as did Greville, at my precipitation, in professing the most violent love for Theresa, and imploring him not to discourage my passion, but to allow me to attempt gaining her hand and heart.

"Greville said the existence of such feeling was very unlikely on so short an acquaintance; but, if I persisted in such a fancy, he should be obliged to restore her to her convent. I was extremely hurt at his incredulity; and after farther discourse, the convent scheme was abandoned, and he promised I should occasionally see Theresa. In his way, however, he added, that it was only to humour his own idleness, for he was sure the best thing for us both was never to meet again. I now ventured to ask why he seemed more inclined to encourage her acquaintance with Graham than with

myself? 'I have lived long enough in the world,' he replied, 'easily to penetrate the feelings of youths such as yourself and Graham: from the first hour you met, I saw you admired her, whilst the insensible Graham, at each interview, seems to grow more indifferent.' —'Your wish is, then, that she should not marry?'—'Oh, Heaven forbid!—not at all, I assure you,' he answered laughingly; 'but yours and Graham's situations are very different, and I should be highly pleased if he were to fall madly in love with Theresa. Marry her I must, and if not now, I shall soon find a *partie convenable* at Paris.'—'Gracious Heavens!' I exclaimed, 'and marry her without consulting her inclinations?'—'The inclinations of young ladies are rarely consulted on the Continent, when the question is marriage; and *I* have no great reason to be an advocate for

the manner in which such events are brought to pass in England.'—'You still have not explained to me what I think I have a right to know; why Graham, who loves not, is to be preferred to one who, however you may ridicule his passion, has boldly avowed it.'—'As to preference,' said Greville, 'as men, I think any woman might be happy in your love, any man proud of such sons: but your situations are different; I do not mean as to rank, for I retain enough of the Englishman within me as to think *family* quite equal to *title*, in many cases superior; but Graham is more independent of his father than you are. I know his father well,—a selfish, worldly man of pleasure, indifferent to his son and all, save his own indulgences. His own conduct will so little bear scrutiny, that he dare not interfere with that of his son, and he would easily con-

sent to his marriage, for the same reason that he now allows him double the allowance of any young man of his age; not from love, but that they may have as little to do with each other as possible, and be perfectly independent in their path of life, whether bad or good. On the other hand, Lord Delamore being the exact contrast of Mr. Graham, his sanction, inasmuch as it would be more flattering, would be in proportion difficult to obtain, supposing you were to carry your love of Theresa so far as ever to ask it.'

"Greville ceased; and I ventured to explain the indulgent character of my father. He interrupted me: 'You may *think* all this, but the *proof* is wanting —*nous verrons*, or rather I ought to say, *nous verrons pas*. I do not desire to anticipate evils in marrying Theresa. I would willingly launch her with gentle

gales on smooth seas, so that when storms do arise, and they assuredly will, she may not consider me as the primary cause of all her suffering.'

"Not to be tedious, however, I soon found opportunities of rendering myself agreeable to Theresa, so that in a few weeks I had the felicity of hearing from her own lips that she was not insensible to my love. Greville, finding his daughter's happiness equally engaged with mine, lent a more willing ear to the subject of our attachment; and, after some debate, the letters which I hope have been favourably received were dispatched, soliciting your and my father's consent to my marriage with his daughter.

"Thus, my dearest mother, I have given you an exact account of my love. I hope you will not think me quite distracted by my passion, though, if you

knew Theresa, you would acknowledge I have cause.

" This letter I send by Graham. To our great sorrow, his father has summoned him immediately to England. We shall remain here till the answers to the letters on which my fate depends arrive. My impatience no words can describe.

I am, my dear Mother,
Yours, &c.
ELLIOT."

TO MRS. VILLIERS.

" MY heart almost misgave me with regard to Elliot's marriage. The enclosed letter will show you that my fears are verified. Not being able to gain any satisfactory intelligence with regard to Mr. Greville's family in England, where his name seemed to have been never heard, I wrote to my old friend Mrs.

Handbury, at Paris, where, from her long residence and love of society, I was assured if any one knew him, it must be she. Her answer has reached me; and from that, with whatever pain it may cost us to deny our consent to Elliot's wishes, Lord Elliot and myself have determined to put an end to his destined marriage. It would have been better had we done so at first; but wishing to yield, where no glaring objection appeared, we consented against our better judgment. Happily, the marriage was not to take place for a year, and happily the passions of youth are fierce but fading flames, and I hope, after the first disappointment, they will reconcile themselves to their lot, without giving way to despair, which, though our determination is unalterable, would render us more miserable than themselves, in having, from ignorance of the Greville

family, held out hopes, which I would rather die, now that their private history is made known, than see fulfilled. Miss Greville may have virtue and principle; but, descended from such parents, the probability is, that very much the contrary is the fact.

Yours, &c.

M. DELAMORE."

(Letter enclosed.)

"As a motive of idle curiosity, I am sure, could not actuate Lady Delamore's inquiry, I shall be happy to give her every information in my power concerning Mr. Greville.

"The events of his private life were once made so public, that though they may have escaped your memory, you must, I think, have been informed concerning them. His original name was

Evelyn. He married a daughter of Lord Fornham's, a marriage which proved unfortunate. She was divorced, and afterwards married Colonel Douglas. On the trial, however discreditable to Lady Mary, circumstances arose which did not leave her husband blameless, and opened such scenes of extravagance, folly, I believe I might add profligacy, in the lives they both had led, that Mr. G. was very glad to leave England till the affair had somewhat blown over, and also to retrieve his affairs, which were in so wretched a state, as probably would have made him a needy man for the remainder of his days, but for an unexpected turn of fortune. A very distant relation died, and left him a very considerable property, and he took, in consequence, the name of Greville. It was now in his power to

revisit his native land, which he had left five years before; but, captivated by foreign manners and society, he continued where necessity had originally placed him. One only child was the fruit of his marriage; a daughter, who, on his departure from England, he had the extreme negligence, to say no worse, to leave with her mother; and it was not for several years that he removed her from the society of one of whose existence it would have been better she had remained in ignorance. I believe she is now in a convent in France or Italy.

"Gay, clever, and gentlemanlike, Mr. Greville has all his life had great success in society, but no where more so than at Paris; which is not surprising, for his manners are very agreeable, and not the worse, in my opinion, for retaining some-

what of his native independence both in speech and action, most peculiarly striking in this land of *fausseté*. A great intimacy existed between him, your son, and Mr. Graham; and I understand they are now at Naples together. As to Mr. Greville's private character of late years, *we* do not look much behind the scenes at this place; but I imagine it has not been more sanctified than that of other single men, but quite devoid of public scandal; and though generous and hospitable, he is not extravagant, which shows that his youth or his wife was the cause of his former embarrassments.

"With every wish for your health and happiness,

Yours, &c.

JANE HANDBURY."

TO MRS. VILLIERS.

"At length, my dear sister, the long-expected answers to our letters of the 5th of March have arrived. The courier to whom we intrusted them was detained by illness on the road, so that on reaching ———, where we imagined Elliot to be, he discovered that my son had left that place. The courier accordingly retraced his footsteps, but in the meantime, some letters by the ordinary post, of a later date, had reached my son, giving him some suspicions of the true state of the case, which those by the courier confirmed: he is returning instantly to England, and may be here any hour, for it was on the road betwixt Calais and Paris that the courier overtook him. From Elliot and the Grevilles being separated, and the former

choosing to charge the courier with answers to his letters, rather than that he should return to Paris to Mr. Greville, and deliver him his from Lord Delamore, the last-mentioned dispatch was actually again in our hands—for a very short moment, as you may imagine—our object being to put an end to the whole affair as quickly as possible. Elliot's answers are very calm,—Lord Delamore is quite satisfied with them; but I must confess, that their placidity seems to me to arise from his considering our determination more in the light of a threat than a resolve.

Your's, &c.

M. D."

TO THE SAME.

"Alas! my dear sister, I begin to imagine you were right formerly to

blame our indulgence of Elliot—not that I can recall to my mind any time when the propriety of exerting the authority of a parent was necessary, for he was ever gentle, obedient, and affectionate. Were we blind, or is it love that has transformed him, and raised in his mind those passions, which now make me tremble? But to proceed to the events of the last few days:—the particulars of the scene which took place on Elliot's arrival, I neither will nor can relate. He was deaf to reason, to prayers; he declared his resolution to marry, with or without our consent; no power on earth should divide him from Theresa, for whom he was ready to sacrifice friends, fortune, and country. It was in vain Lord Delamore lectured, and I wept; he left the room and house, announcing his intentions of joining the Grevilles again directly; and he was

on the very eve of executing his intentions, when Mr. Graham interfered, and Elliot established himself at an hotel, waiting, I presume, some concession on our part. On Saturday I heard, but could not believe it, that Mr. and Miss Greville were arrived in London:—it was so, however. She appeared in the evening at the Opera, where her beauty and Parisian dress excited unusual admiration; and on leaving the house, every one in the room flocked to see her pass, in a flattering but oppressive manner. She was leaning on Elliot's arm, Mr. Greville leading the way, escorting Lady St. John. On Sunday morning Lord Delamore received a very polite note from Mr. Greville, demanding an interview, as he understood some obstacles had arisen with regard to the proposed alliance between the families, which a letter he still was to receive

should have explained. Accordingly, Mr. Greville arrived. I understand he is forty years of age, but he might very well pass for ten years younger—his air is quite that of a young man. He was very well dressed, very well bred, and entered the room with an easy unconcern, which rather astonished Lord Delamore, who was very far from participating in such feelings; and was in some distress how to open the business on which they met, in the least harsh and most civil terms. After some little hesitation, he ventured to declare his objections to the proposed marriage; what he said was decided; but perfectly well bred; he gave his reasons fairly, and made many apologies for apparent fickleness, assigning the true cause,—little knowledge of the private concerns of any one beyond his own confined circle of acquaintance. Mr. Greville is either a

most able diplomatist, or the most indifferent of men. He listened with the most perfect *sang-froid* as Lord Delamore concluded, took a pinch of snuff with great precision, and then, in the most gentle voice possible, observed,—that as he was well aware of the severity of his lordship's principles, which were only to be equalled by his merit, he was sorry, but not surprised, at his determination; that he regretted the affair should have been carried the length it had; but no blame could be attached to either side, as it arose from his being an obscure individual of humble birth—an obscurity, which however in this instance he might regret it, he was not inclined to quarrel with in general, as it happily shielded him, in some degree, from the strictures of a gossiping and malevolent world, which once he had deemed no

situation in life secure from. This humble speech was rather belied by the air with which it was delivered: as it concluded, he rose to take leave. Lord Delamore detained him a few minutes, by requesting that, as all idea of marriage between their children was at an end, he hoped he would discourage Elliot's visits to Miss Greville. This demand, though put with the greatest civility, was answered by Mr. Greville inquiring, haughtily, if Lord Delamore imagined he had any intention of forcing his daughter into a family unwilling to receive her?—'But,' he added, before Lord Delamore had time to reply, and with a smile something bordering on a sneer, 'your lordship may be quite easy on that head; I shall leave town to-night for Paris. Elliot dines with us, but I shall not tell him of my intentions, nor

even my daughter, till he has left us, and the carriage is at the door!'—He then bowed profoundly and withdrew.

Your's, &c.

M. DELAMORE."

TO THE SAME.

"ELLIOT'S spirits had been so much better the last week, that I began to indulge a hope that his unfortunate passion was yielding to reason: the fallacy of such an idea I proved, to my great sorrow, yesterday. After Mr. Greville's departure, which a little offended him, he was prevailed on by Mr. Graham to take up his abode again with us. Yesterday morning he did not appear at breakfast; and on inquiry, I found that Mr. Graham had called upon him early, and after a long interview they had gone out together: the servant added, that

my son looked very much agitated when he left the house. This account rather made me impatient for Elliot's return; at length, to my great joy, I heard his well-known step; but my pleasure was only momentary; for, on his appearance, I was convinced that some new misfortune had occurred. He sat down without speaking, and with a look so expressive of misery, that I shall not easily forget it. I implored to know what had so deeply affected him? Judge of my surprise, when he answered me fiercely, 'My grief will be no cause of regret to you—Theresa is married!'—'Married!' I exclaimed. 'Yes, married,' he replied,—'sacrificed, I should rather say!' He left the room, and I saw him no more till about an hour ago, when he came to inform me that he was going with Mr. Graham to Lord St. John's, at Rich-

mond: his air was that of the deepest dejection. When I inquired how long he would be absent, he replied that his military arrangements would oblige him to return in a day or two. I started, not being aware that they were at all advanced far enough, to be any thing beyond a private matter of discussion. Elliot observed my emotion, and, taking my hand, said earnestly:—'I hope my dear mother requires no more sacrifices from her son!' I faintly answered, that I trusted his entering the army would be a means of diverting his mind, and restoring his spirits. Elliot sighed deeply and left the room, with a heart not more sad than hers he had quitted.

"I have with some difficulty collected a few particulars of Miss Greville's marriage, with which I will conclude my letter. It appears that the Comte d'Harcourt, passing one evening in Miss Gre-

ville's company, was so captivated by her beauty as to propose for her in marriage to Mr. Greville the following morning; the proposal was made through his father, who was no less captivated by her twenty thousand pounds. The Comte d'Harcourt is in every respect an advantageous alliance, being young, good-looking, and of a noble family; but the engagement to Elliot was a very sufficient answer to his proposal, with which he was obliged to be content. Elliot was just then gone to England, the Grevilles remaining at Paris to follow in a few days.

"It seems as if Mr. Greville had his misgivings, even then, that the marriage between our families was not likely to take place; for otherwise he never could have told M. d'Harcourt that, should any obstacle arise, Theresa should be his: a promise that he fulfilled so precisely,

that I am informed the marriage actually took place at St. Denis, where they were met by the impatient lover, on their way from Calais to Paris. This event was communicated by Mr. Greville in a letter to Mr. Graham, and by him was imparted to poor Elliot; not a word was said of Miss G——, and I believe his grief is in some measure enhanced by a feeling of the possibility of her having yielded, but too willingly perhaps, to the wishes of her father. If such is the case, Elliot has had a most fortunate escape in every respect; if otherwise, alas! poor girl, much as I rejoice in an insurmountable barrier being placed betwixt her and my son, I could yet weep for what her feelings must have been when she found such was the case.

Your's, &c.

MARIA DELAMORE."

TO THE SAME.

"WHEN, oh when, my dear sister, will the troubles cease which Elliot's unfortunate attachment have occasioned? Just when I had hoped he was more reconciled to his loss, a fresh event has occurred which will again tear open his wounds, and may, probably will, be the cause of incalculable evil. The Comtesse d'Harcourt is ill, dangerously so; she has desired to see Elliot; he has flown to her,—has left England,—is gone to Paris! What can be the result of such a step, if she recover, or if her illness prove fatal?—if the latter be the case, I dread every thing from Elliot's despair; if the former, this proof of their attachment being unchanged may lead to the greatest misery, and perhaps—which God in His mercy forbid—guilt. That kind young man, Mr. Graham, is gone with him."

TO THE SAME.

"*Dover.*

"I ENCLOSE a letter which will explain all. I am just embarking for France. Elliot, my dearest Elliot, is dangerously ill.—Alas! alas! why did we resist his wishes? It is now too late. The Comtesse d'Harcourt is dead—young and lovely, she has sunk to an early tomb,—and Elliot, our pride, our hope, perhaps even now he is no more!—Pity and pray for your affectionate sister,

M. D."

(Letter enclosed.)

"MY DEAR MADAM,

"WITHOUT entering into any of the particulars of our journey, I hasten to inform you that we are arrived, and Elliot is, upon the whole, better than I expected; and I am also happy to add, that the accounts of the Comtesse d'Har-

court are more favourable, though I greatly fear, from what Greville says, (whom I have seen,) that her ultimate recovery is hopeless. Poor Greville is deeply afflicted, and was, on first seeing me, far too much agitated to be able to converse with tolerable composure: it was only at the conclusion of my visit that I gathered from him, that ever since Theresa's case had been pronounced dangerous, she had expressed a wish to see Elliot; her importunity was at last so great, that Greville obtained permission of Harcourt, that Elliot should be informed of her desires. Nothing but the conviction of her approaching end would have made Greville take such a step.—'As it is,' he said, 'the opinion of the world will be of little moment in the grave, and its censure must be silenced when its object is removed to a more merciful Judge, I trust, than we are to

one another.'—To-morrow, Elliot is to see Theresa: after the interview, I will close this letter."

"*Friday.*

"If I had time, words would fail me to give you more than a brief outline of the events of this morning. Theresa, poor Theresa, is no more! At the hour appointed, which, to avoid remark, was early, Elliot and myself repaired to the Hotel d'Harcourt. He was instantly admitted into Theresa's apartment, Greville and myself remaining in the ante-room, a door of communication being left open between the apartments. A quarter of an hour, or perhaps not so much, elapsed, when a scream from Theresa's maid, who was also in her room, made Greville rush in: I followed. The dreadful truth was then too manifest. Poor Theresa's early fate was closed; and Elliot, not less an object of pity, lay pale and mo-

tionless as her whose last sigh he had just received.

"In a moment, the room was full of people, amongst others, Harcourt: all was confusion. With the assistance of some one, to whom Greville spoke with authority, I conveyed Elliot to the carriage. I cannot conceal from you that he is very ill: his pulse is high, and the physician who has blooded him will not pronounce his opinion: quiet is essential, and therefore I have accepted an offer by a friend of mine, of a house at St. Cloud, where we shall be in reach of medical advice, and out of this noisy city and noisy hotel. After what I have said, it is needless, I am sure, to add the hope, that you or Lord Delamore will instantly repair to your son, which I am the more desirous for, as my father is very impatient for my return to England; but I certainly will

not quit Elliot until you are with him. Your soothing care, I am sure, will be more conducive to his recovery than any other medicine whatsoever.—Accompanied by the physician, we leave Paris at an early hour to-morrow morning for St. Cloud.

I remain, &c. &c.

CHARLES GRAHAM."

TO MRS. VILLIERS.

"*Portsmouth.*

"MY DEAREST SISTER,

"ELLIOT has sailed. Last night the ship got under weigh; this morning it still appeared, though only a speck in the horizon; now, even that vestige is vanished. He is gone to meet dangers and difficulties which it would have broken my heart once to think of his encountering:—he is separated from us, perhaps for ever; for, if he survive, we may have long

sunk to rest ere he returns; and yet I am calm, and I could say almost content. There was no alternative; Elliot's state of mind required active exertion; our only hope for his future peace was to allow him to follow the bent of his inclination. May the step he has taken arouse him from his grief! and may the same Providence who has so lately restored him from the verge of the tomb, watch over and protect him, and pour the balm of peace into his wounded mind! My grief for his loss is restrained by my trust in our Heavenly Father; it is the remembrance of His mercies through a long life, which checks the voice of complaint; and if it is His will that I should never embrace my dear boy again—if, contrary to the course of nature, I should survive, may the Almighty hand, who inflicts the blow, give his father and myself fortitude to

bear it, not without feeling, but without murmuring.

" Your information with regard to Mr. Graham's marriage is correct. I trust he will find the happiness he deserves. How little do we know what is best for ourselves or others. When first I heard of his intimacy with Elliot, I remember feeling sorry that such should be the case. I knew nothing of him but by report, which described him as an idle, extravagant, gay young man, devoted to pleasure, early launched into the world with no guide but a father, who valued himself on the name given to the companions of the Regent Duke of Orleans—that of Roué. I trembled at the idea that such was my son's friend ; the captivation of wit and talents, which those that blamed him gave him credit for, was only to render him so much the more dangerous. Most

groundless, indeed, were my fears, and most heartily ashamed am I, ever to have been prejudiced by the gossip of the world against a young man, who, whatever may have been his very early follies, has merits more than sufficient to counterbalance them over and over again. His kindness to Elliot has been beyond all praise; his unwearied attention to him at the time of poor Theresa's death, may have been the cause of saving his life, for he was at that moment, I fear, capable of any rash act; and, after the first violence of his despair was over, until our arrival, Graham still watched night and day over him with an anxiety which the French physician, who gave me the account, said could only be compared to that of a lover for his mistress. And this is the man who, in my blind folly, I lamented my son's acquaintance with!

"Farewell, my dear sister; we are

setting off immediately for Delamore Castle, where the prospect of your and Mr. Villiers's promised visit is the most agreeable perspective in the gloom of my future childless days.

Yours, &c.

MARIA DELAMORE."

It would be impossible to describe the various conflicting feelings which agitated Caroline's mind on perusing the above letters. Had those concerned in them been indifferent to her, the interest in their contents would have been great; but so connected as she was with him to whom they related, she felt at times almost too much agitated to be able to proceed. When they were concluded, however; when the whole truth of Lord Delamore's character, his former passion, contrasted with his present indifference, lay open to her view, the

most bitter feeling of regret and disappointment took possession of her mind. Caroline was young, handsome, susceptible; she had sense and talents; an admiring world, if she knew it not before, had not left her ignorant of what she was; and her heart had often whispered, that her lord was unworthy of her; that all his rank, and fortune, and grandeur, could not compensate for one thing wanting—love. No doubt on that subject could any longer exist; he cared not for her, never did care for her; he had married to please his parents, and to have an heir to his estate!

Caroline's eyes rested on her wedding ring:—"Until death alone do us part," she exclaimed with a heavy sigh; then pushing the papers into a drawer, she walked to the window. "I could have reclaimed him had he been inconstant; I could have softened him had he been

unkind; but I cannot war against the dead. A cold heart, I have the vanity to suppose, I might move; but where there is no heart at all, an angel from Heaven could not but fail. Why! oh why, then, did I marry?" And with this too common mental inquiry, the tears chased each other down her cheeks, and, throwing herself on the sofa, she allowed them to flow unchecked. Caroline had a mind not deaf to reason; mortified and disappointed as she was by the history she had read, she could yet rejoice, that as such existed she was no longer in ignorance. In one respect, Lord Delamore's character was raised in her estimation; to a youthful mind such as Caroline's, though she despaired of ever possessing his love herself, it was something satisfactory that he *had* felt its power. Still there was enough for regret and wretchedness. Even the late

Lady Delamore seemed no longer to have been the disinterested friend she had ever appeared; the perfection of her character was sullied. "Had she told me," thought Caroline, "all I now know, it would have been better for her son and me; in her blind partiality, she thought, to be his wife, was happiness sufficient for a reasonable woman—the possession of his affections a trifling consideration unworthy being dwelt on; she meant for the best, and I must do my best to be a good wife."

From this time may be dated a complete change in Caroline's sentiments towards her lord; she pitied him, and did not respect him less; but all warmer feelings melted gradually away. Love cannot exist without some support from the object of affection; otherwise a picture, or a statue, might as easily inspire a passion as one dead

———" to the dearest theme
That ever warm'd a minstrel's dream."

In friendship, in maternal love, she hoped to solace herself for the disappointment in a more tender passion;—a disappointment from which she had the wisdom so far to extract comfort, as to consider how much worse had been the fate of many others of her sex, who, married with far brighter prospects of happiness than herself, and having tasted of the cup of bliss, had found it dashed from their lips by death, or, worse, the inconstancy of man.

CHAPTER XI.

Lord Delamore's affairs obliged him, somewhat against his will, to revisit Delamore Castle, before he established his family at Highwood. Caroline intended and imagined her reception of him was as usual; but the fact was not so; she was absent, and silent; the hope which had formerly influenced her conduct was gone, and, without herself being conscious of the change, there was an indifference in her manner, which Lord Delamore well observed, and which, with his general mode of quick decision, he

placed to the account of increased distaste for a country life; a taste he also decided upon as attributable to her late dissipated habits. He asked no questions, fearing to be informed of the truth, and only marked his own feelings by still greater reserve and coldness in his manners—a style of conduct not likely to produce in Caroline a more cheerful view of her future prospects, or a more friendly feeling towards her lord.

On a cold wet evening, in the beginning of October, Lord and Lady Delamore reached Highwood. This new-purchased residence was large and comfortless, situated on an extensive piece of barren ground, designated a park, but to which its last possessor had destroyed all title, by cutting down every stick of timber, and selling the deer. The house was built in the worst style that prevailed a century ago. A large hall and

staircase occupied the whole centre, which to warm, defied the art of man: from this point diverged numberless small and irregular rooms. Having passed through two of these, Caroline entered what was termed the drawing-room; an apartment very little resembling that so called by a modern lady of fashion. A dozen faded blue damask chairs, a small pembroke table, two marble slabs on gilt legs between the windows, surmounted by small, round looking-glasses in gaudy frames, added to a melancholy portrait of the late owner over the chimney, which no living creature cared to save from the hands of strangers, comprised the furniture of this principal apartment in the house. A cheerful fire, however, blazed in the ample grate, towards which Caroline sprung with unfeigned delight.

"I am afraid," said Delamore, "you

will find this house worse than you expected."

"Oh, I dare say not; you always described it as capable of improvement."

"The last proprietor judged very differently," observed Lord Delamore, regarding the portrait before him. "Grief, at being obliged to quit this house, it is said, accelerated his end."

"Poor man!" sighed Caroline: "I wonder whether such attachment is catching, and whether we shall ever incur the same danger for love of these old bare walls?"

"These old bare walls, as you term them, I have no wish should remain as they are: the inside of the house you may exert your fancy or taste in transforming as you please; the outside I shall consider my department."

"And both, in our several ways, will

be at no loss for employment," said Lady Delamore, casting a piteous glance at the window. "Planting, I hope, will be one of your first steps. I shall be very sorry if, when Elliot is married, we cannot get wood from our own domain to make a bonfire."

Lord Delamore liked not what is termed badinage in any one, and in his wife it was particularly disagreeable to him. He never showed displeasure in words however, his actions being sufficiently intelligible; and at this time, the abrupt manner with which he took his hat and left the room, was more strongly expressive of his feelings than the most angry lecture. Caroline's effort at gaiety was extinguished; a sigh burst from her heart, and a tear rushed to her eye. "Such is always the end to any thing but the most serious discourse. Well, my efforts at merriment must soon

cease, and I may well be surprised they have lasted so long. Perhaps, when I am dead to all pleasure, silent, and broken-spirited, Lord Delamore may think the untimely fate of Theresa sufficiently avenged by the sacrifice of his wife's happiness, and may have some compassion upon one, who, but for him, might have been the gayest of the gay; who might have met some one, who, without all the hateful trappings of wealth and power, which conceal but cannot cure the desolate heart; who, in the despised Caroline, would have found one worthy of being loved for herself, with whom she might have trod the intricate path of life in confidence and cheerfulness; not as now, blindly indulged, or as blindly reprehended." As Caroline ceased, for she spoke aloud, she heard a sigh from some one near her: turning quickly round, she saw the

room-door hastily closed: in a moment she re-opened it, to see who the intruder might be, and caught sight of the figure of a man, who vanished through the door leading into the hall. "Lord Delamore it must have been," thought Caroline; but at that moment Lord Delamore appeared in front of the house, walking with his agent from an opposite direction. "Well, the best thing for me, probably, would be to discover, that the ghost of the late owner of the house continues to haunt it, for my meditations were the very worst possible for mortal ears." And Caroline returned to the fire, to ruminate upon whom it could have been, and rather to regret it was not Lord Delamore.

The following day, Caroline and her lord walked out, directing their steps to a neighbouring village. The little community seemed in no small agitation; the

cause was soon explained. That morning their rector's eldest daughter had married a young clergyman of the neighbourhood, and in honour of the event, her father had given a rural fête to his parishioners, in which a plentiful repast had been crowned by a dance on the green before his door, which was being executed with becoming spirit, when Lord and Lady Delamore mingled amongst the spectators. His lordship felt no interest whatsoever in the scene: but not so Caroline; to her it was the very sight to excite all her lively and tender sensibilities. Though the rector was no respecter of persons, yet the poor class, content with an hearty meal, remained only as lookers-on, or retired entirely. The dancers were of the rank of farmers or tradesmen's families, amongst whom the sisters of the bride were as conspicuous for their good looks as simple

attire; for "the town has tinged the country," and simplicity in the *genteel* world of a country village is as rare as in the most crowded metropolis.

"Is not that Graham?" said Lord Delamore, after a pause. Caroline followed his glance, and observed a young man in the dress of a sportsman, conversing with the rector. It was he, indeed; and in a few minutes more he took the hand of a pretty little girl of ten years old, for whom the beaux were not sufficiently numerous to afford a partner, and joined the medley dance. To please the rural throng was not a very difficult task, and Graham's dancing better judges had often admired. It was the good-nature, not the skill of the performance, however, which now drew forth a quiet though general buzz of approbation, as Graham flew down the dance with his elated little partner; and every one

seemed to have his pleasure enhanced, and his self-consequence raised, by his landlord being a partaker in his amusements. The dance being concluded, and Graham's partner delivered to her homely parent, the village grocer, he was not long in discovering Lord Delamore's tall figure preeminent in the crowd; and a bonnet, which no rustic belle, however bedizened, could have ever possessed, close by his elbow, gave notice that Lady Delamore was also one of the party. In a moment he was with his friend; and, after a cordial shake of the hand, he said, laughing, "I foresee, Delamore, you will be a most dangerous neighbour. Not four-and-twenty hours have you been in the country, and you have witnessed a prank more suited to days long gone by, than to my present sobered character. But let me do the honours of the village to you, and intro-

duce you to the giver of the fête. Will Lady Delamore allow me to conduct her to the aristocratical portion of the company, where a certain shovel-hat is ready to sweep the ground at your presence, and the back of a very unbendable figure to follow its example, if possible, by stooping to your feet?"

Caroline had no objection, and her arm was for a moment in Graham's. Lord Delamore, however, spoke in opposition; he detested greeting in the market-place, and wished to be walking home. The question was not worth discussing; his wife and friend, therefore, followed his opinion, and also his steps, and they were soon removed from the sight and noise of the fête. Mr. Graham remained with Lord and Lady Delamore during the remainder of the walk. The conversation was entirely between him and his friend, on subjects which Caroline's

ignorance prevented her joining in, and which, at another time, she would have hardly attended to at all; but there was a spirit and vivacity in Mr. Graham's remarks that arrested her attention, though they were solely upon, to her, the uninteresting topics of farming and horses; which, added to the most persuasive voice which ever met her ear, made her listen with pleasure to one for whom her esteem had been considerably raised by the perusal of Lady Delamore's letters. Mr. Graham was not what is strictly termed handsome,—and a painter would have turned with contempt from any one who dared pronounce him so,—yet handsome he had been more often called than not. He possessed one of the greatest charms in looks—countenance; in it beamed sense, good-nature, spirit, and, for once, it was a faithful index of the mind; such he was, and much more,—just, humane, open, happy

in the happiness of others, free from all selfish care, cheerful, generous. Is it, then, surprising Lord Delamore felt for him an affection of which the friendships of men rarely produce instances; or that, sick of the world, indifferent to its praise or censure, unsocial and melancholy, he still clung to Graham,—still, for his sake, cherished an existence which, when he lost Theresa, lost its greatest charm?

Before Mr. Graham took leave, it was agreed that the following day Lord Delamore and Caroline should dine at Branches Park, the name of Mr. Graham's seat. The following day accordingly they repaired to fulfil their engagement; and during the short drive, for the carriage-road was not more than three miles, and the foot and horse-way much less, Caroline tried to drag from her lord some particulars of Lady Juliana Graham, on whom she considered

something might depend in rendering her residence at Highwood agreeable or otherwise. Former experience had taught her that such inquiries were not usually very satisfactorily answered by Lord Delamore; but she was not always discouraged, and would question and cross-question till she sometimes gained the information she wanted.

"Is Lady Juliana handsome?" she inquired.

"I do not know," was the decided answer.

"You never saw her then?"

"Two or three times."

"And have forgot her looks?"

"I rather believe she is reckoned handsome," said Lord Delamore, putting down the glass to look at the horse the servant rode.

"I wonder whether she is agreeable?" observed Caroline.—No answer.

"I do not believe she has lived much in the world."—No answer.

"Do you know, Lord Delamore, if she is clever?" So direct a question produced a reply. He understood she was a sensible woman.

"And likely," continued Caroline, "to make an agreeable neighbour."

"That must depend as much upon yourself as her, I should imagine," replied Lord Delamore, with his usual solemnity. Caroline asked no more questions; for at that moment they were in the Park, and her thoughts had full occupation, without any need of speculations as to Lady Juliana's good or bad qualities.

Branches Park, in any county or country, might be reckoned a fine place. It owed, however, more to art than nature; but as Caroline had been no great traveller, she was not inclined to quarrel

with it for a certain air of stiffness and formality, which, however artfully disposed, must be the prevailing character of a made place, and which, to the fastidious eyes of those really conversant in fine natural scenery, may be more disagreeable than pleasing to the view. Within the house, which was an extensive and elegant building, the same air prevailed as without, and in a much more appropriate sphere. Silk hangings, mirrors, pictures, china, all that luxury could invent, or money purchase, met the glance in every apartment, and the Delamores passed through several into that where the family were assembled; and where, conspicuous by height, dress, and manner, sat Lady Juliana Howard Graham, who, with a formal and not prepossessing air, rose to receive her guests. Though not six-and-twenty, Lady Juliana looked much more; her

face was handsome, but with a peevish expression of countenance; she was very tall and large, but an habitual stoop had entirely destroyed what claim she ever had to figure, and gave an awkwardness to her carriage, which not all the noble blood which flowed in her veins, and of which no lady could be more conscious, could prevent. Being much what is termed over-drest, she seemed to regard with contempt Caroline's simple attire, who, in her turn, could hardly help smiling at any one thinking it worth while, for a party of six in the country, to bedeck her hair with artificial flowers, and her neck with jewels.

As soon as Lady Juliana had performed her part of reception, her husband hastened to pay his compliments to his friends, and to introduce them to his sister, and her husband Lord St. John.

Lady St. John in no one respect bore any resemblance to her sister-in-law: she was short, but well made, and carried herself so as to do full justice to her five feet two. She looked young of her years, and, without being pretty, her bright and somewhat cunning eyes were extremely attractive, particularly when her very ready smiles displayed a row of teeth like pearls. A young lady in outgrown frocks, hair of no unwomanly length, and rather inquisitive looks, gave signs, which nothing else did, that Lady St. John's married career did not begin yesterday.

The dinner was extremely pleasant. Mr. Graham acted the courteous host to perfection, and, by his lively conversation, soon made Caroline forget that he was an acquaintance of very late date; that his wife's manners were repulsive, and that his sister's laugh bordered on

the satirical. But the person in whom animation excited her utmost surprise, was Lord Delamore; the presence of his friend seemed to have inspired him with a life and powers of conversation she had never witnessed in him before, and which, without expecting to be materially benefited by such an improved disposition herself, yet gave her the most sincere pleasure. To a feeling mind, nothing is so painful as witnessing the hourly workings of discontent; to see every advantage of fortune, talent, situation, wasted on their possessor; and whilst so much real misery exists in the world,—when every day, every hour presents examples of the most poignant distress, which must be borne, from which the sufferer has no time, or wealth, or power, to seek alleviation, and must struggle with as he can;—when such is too often the case, how mean, how

selfish are the sorrows of such men as Lord Delamore!

> "In such a world, so thorny, and where none
> Finds happiness unblighted; or, if found,
> Without some thistly sorrow at its side;
> It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
> Against the law of love, to measure lots
> With less distinguished than ourselves; that thus
> We may with patience bear our moderate ills,
> And sympathize with others suff'ring more."

The whole life of the party was gone when the ladies found themselves in the drawing-room. Lady Juliana was cold, dull, and unbending; her haughtiness of demeanour strangely contrasting with the homeliness of her conversation, consisting chiefly of domestic details, never very interesting, and which, in her hands, were painfully wearisome. Caroline's politeness forced her to attend; but Lady St. John, profiting by not being

the person particularly addressed, lay herself under no such restraint, yawning unmercifully, when her bold though abortive efforts to introduce a more lively discourse, seemed to have only the effect of plunging Lady Juliana, her spirit roused by opposition, into an obstinate relation of all the evils she had suffered from the stupidity of servants, or the neglect of neighbours.

CHAPTER XII.

It is not the period which is spent most gaily, that passes most rapidly; the noiseless foot of time steals generally forward with most apparent expedition when there is no particular event to mark its progress one way or the other. The life at Highwood was retired and monotonous even to dulness, yet six weeks flew rapidly away. The house was not in a state for visitors, though carpenters and upholsterers were busily employed in finding a remedy for what Caroline regarded as a much more

serious evil than did her lord; of their neighbours they saw few, excepting those at the Park, and with them Lady Delamore's acquaintance made little progress. Lady Juliana, cold and formal, contented herself with a single ceremonious call, which was in due time returned. Mr. Graham and herself dined once at Highwood, and a second visit had been talked of, but never made. From Lady Juliana, Caroline expected nothing, and therefore was not disappointed to find nothing. Mr. Graham promised better things, but him she hardly ever saw; he was for ever with Lord Delamore, abroad and at home; but if he fell in Caroline's path, it was entirely accident; their acquaintance therefore, at the conclusion of six weeks' neighbourhood, had made no progress. With Lord and Lady St. John the case was different; they did not think it requisite to follow the ex-

ample of the heads of the house; he was no great sportsman, nor much addicted to books; the addition of a pretty lively neighbour was not to be neglected, and a walk to Highwood, to sit over a cheerful fire with its mistress, soon became, both to Lord and Lady St. John, the most agreeable occupation of the day.

One reason of Lady St. John's visits it was not very difficult to solve—between her and Lady Juliana little cordiality existed; they were both sufficiently well-bred to keep up appearances; and when such were not necessary, the bounds of decorum were observed; but only so far as each, in her inward heart, to consider the other extremely disagreeable. Lady Juliana, though she would have expired sooner than confess the truth, was terribly afraid of her sister-in-law, who, in her turn, despised the former as a woman of narrow mind and mean under-

standing; and to escape from the society of whom, to that of Lady Delamore, was the height of felicity. Caroline herself was not sorry to have her solitary hours enlivened by a conversible, witty companion; and mutual convenience beginning their intimacy, mutual liking continued it. Lady St. John knew enough of the world not to be captivated by mere beauty of person; but the fascination of Caroline's manners she found irresistible. Lady St. John, however, did not make so decidedly favourable an impression on her companion. The latter saw in her much to amuse, something to like; but a want of softness in her manners, and a freedom in her ideas and conversation, fell harshly on Caroline's more gentle feelings. Excepting her brother, no one was secure from her censure or more galling satire; of mankind she seemed to possess no very exalted opi-

nion, and she was equally indifferent to their good or bad report, either as it regarded others or herself. Her heart, however, was far from cold, and her disposition was generous and sincere; whenever her praise *was* bestowed, it came with a good will, so as to indemnify her, in some measure, for many harsh and unjust judgments. With her lord she lived perfectly well: he was a plain man in every respect, with good common sense; he had a high idea of the talents of his wife, and yet was not governed by her. She had made a bold push for the upper hand when she married,—a lively wife of seventeen thinking every thing possible with a grave man twice her years: her failure did not diminish her respect for her husband. Mr. Graham she adored: whatever he willed to do or say, was, in her opinion, "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best,"—and she

would frankly own that had his wife been an angel, she should have considered her unworthy of him.—" As it is, however," she observed to Lady Delamore, " I should pity any one who was united to her—' Une femme qui est toujours dans une chaise, qui ne fait pas un pas, qui est une vraie cendreuse,' as Mademoiselle de Montpensier says of some one or another in her Memoirs."

" Then, why did your brother marry her—was it love?" inquired Caroline.

" Love!—Do not do my brother's taste the injustice to imagine such a thing. If you have any wish to know his history, whenever you have time to listen, I will be most happy to relate it."

" No time is so good as the present moment!—You promised to remain the morning, so let us have the whole story; not mangled and defaced in the common

style of conversation histories, but, according to the delightful manner of romance and novel writers, beginning from the cradle."

"With all my heart," answered Lady St. John, drawing her chair nearer to Caroline and the fire: "but you must take the consequence of perhaps hearing a tedious tale,—more pleasing for me to tell, than you to listen to; and lacking wonder, though possessing truth.

"My brother was but a few months old, myself five years, when we had the misfortune to lose our mother. I was myself too young to appreciate her character; but I have always understood she had every mental quality, united to great personal charms; which I can well imagine to have been the case, as she had power for six years to influence and retain the affections of a man, who, in after times, proved that his

natural taste was any thing but domestic; however, during the period of their union, Mr. and Mrs. Graham were esteemed a very happy pair. My father deplored his loss deeply, and, to divert his mind, entered more into the world than he had ever done before: the remedy was very efficacious; and being no longer under the safeguard of a virtuous attachment, and influenced by the example of not very correct companions, he shortly appeared under a very different character to that for which he had gained credit. His fortune was very large; and, besides a great annual income, he had the untouched savings of his minority, which had been unrequired in the handsome, but not extravagant life he and my mother had almost always led in the country. All such wealth was now doomed to fly in every direction,—on the turf, at the gaming-

table, and amongst worthless companions male and female.

"Whilst my father followed his career, his children were happy and contented under the roof of the most amiable of grandmothers. Lady Mordaunt resided in the neighbourhood of Bath: she was the most excellent person possible; kind, charitable, pious, noble-minded. I wonder I am not a great deal better than I am, having been educated by her; and more particularly as I am sure some of her good principles have always stuck by my brother; who, of course, had much fewer opportunities of profiting by her advice and example; for otherwise, how could he have escaped the many rocks which have presented themselves in his path?—how could he be what he now is, after having encountered dangers which have wrecked thousands?

" With my grandmother I lived until my seventeenth year: I knew no sorrow but the departure of my brother for school; but the happiness I experienced at his return repaid me for every tear I then had shed. One annual visit my father paid us, which was always talked of as a matter of great importance before it took place, but in its actual accomplishment never seemed to give Lady Mordaunt or any one else any pleasure. As I became older, I was more convinced such was the case, and adopted the same tone of feeling out of pure love to my grandmother, without knowing the reason of her conduct; for at that time no whisper of my father's real character had ever reached my ear: the unfortunate death of Lady Mordaunt too soon made me acquainted with it. I was hardly seventeen when this event took place; and my father, not knowing what else to

do with me, took me home ;—but what a home !

" Living in the world hardens one to every thing, and nothing surprises, nothing shocks one ; absurdity or vice being the prevailing characteristics of, with very few exceptions, every one we meet. —But at the time I speak of I was a child; I had been accustomed to the society of virtuous, well-educated persons, into whose conversation the disorders of the world never entered. My particular companions had been girls of my own age, with their brothers or cousins, with whom I had danced, sung, walked, and romped, to the much greater endangerment of our lives than our morals ; I knew not that in the whole world there existed so much depravity as one month's residence at my father's made me acquainted with. The only being I could converse with at my ease was my maid ;

she had lived with me from a child, with her I wept and lamented myself; grief soon took from me the small portion of good looks I ever possessed, and with my looks seemed to vanish the equally small portion of my father's affection; he paid me little attention, and excepting at breakfast and dinner, I never saw him. His friends, who were no small society, were odious to me; their conversation was so openly profligate, that my father's might, *by comparison*, be termed virtuous. The pleasure of my brother's return home for the holidays was now at an end: I dreaded the influence of such companions on one so young: happily, however, when he did arrive, his age and disposition made him much more inclined to cultivate the acquaintance of the gamekeeper and groom, to that of their superiors; from them he could learn two useful and

manly qualifications,—to shoot, and to ride;—from the others, he could only acquire what was bad. Next to the two friends I have mentioned, I was certainly third in Charles's esteem; and upon a slight indisposition confining me to my apartment, he became the voluntary companion of my meals and evenings,—a fortunate circumstance, as removing him from the orgies of my father and his worthy allies; and to prolong which good, I contrived my illness should last until my brother's return to Eton; the next holiday, I had a home of my own to offer him, for I was married. This important event took place about seven months after my grandmother's death. Had Lord St. John been the shoeblack, I should hardly have refused him; but as it was, I had every reason to be pleased; and my father was equally so, in disposing of what he considered

an undisposable person, whose example for once he followed; the following month he led to the altar a lady who had been some little time his mistress, and rather longer that of various of his friends!

"Lord St. John, I verily believe, was the only person disappointed at our marriage; he knew me only as a *tear-eyed* maiden, pale and spiritless, with whom he thought to lead a quiet, tame sort of life, never dreaming that beneath my calm exterior existed, or rather slumbered, the most mad-cap spirits, which grief for the loss I had sustained, and at the discovery of my father's character, had for a time obscured. These redoubtable spirits made their way into light, when a certain awe with which the name rather than person of husband inspired me was worn off, to the infinite surprise and horror of his

lordship. The Christmas after our union, being at our country-seat, my brother and myself played such pranks, that it was reported in the neighbourhood that Lord St. John had married a mad woman. Happily, however, for his peace, I fell dangerously ill, the consequence of my own folly; and the alarm I was in, and sufferings I endured, rendered me more rational for the future, more obedient to my lord, and consequently more sane in the eyes of the world.—But where am I wandering to? I am positively infected by Lady Juliana's society, and where I promised my brother's story, am relating one as egotistical and dry as any of her ladyship's;—but I have now done with myself, and will begin a more interesting subject.

"When my brother quitted Eton, my father refused his consent to the two requests he solicited: the one, to go to the

University; the other, into the army, if College was not approved of. My father gave his son a large allowance, an establishment in London, and told him, though not in quite such elegant language, that the proper study of mankind was man; in other words, that ignorance of the world was the only ignorance to be feared; and, provided he gained such knowledge, it little mattered if the path was crooked or straight, vicious or virtuous, and that all other knowledge was superfluous. Whether my father ever possessed that voice of persuasion, which can make the worse appear the better reason, I know not; but, at the time my brother became his pupil, that day, if it ever existed, was certainly gone by; 'the weeds of vice without the flower,' are not inviting.

"Still Charles had perils enough to encounter: rich, idle, well-looking, gay,

and enterprising, with ardent feelings, high spirit and excellent parts, he became the idol of all societies — good and bad, grave and gay, fashionable or dowdy,—in all he was to be found, by all was courted; the only society he frequented not, was his father's; the only house he was a stranger to, was his home. From seventeen till twenty he led the wildest, most vagabond life possible. Amongst other pranks, he and poor D—— (of whom I need not tell his early fate and brilliant talents) travelled about the country as strolling players, under fictitious names; and performed upon one occasion, before a very crowded audience, in a theatre in the North, the parts of Peachum and Macheath. D—— was the better actor; but Charles had the finer voice, and he sung so well, and acted, however inferior to his friend, with such spirit, as fairly to steal the

heart out of the bosom of one of his audience—a lady who, however then in obscurity, has since made up for lost time,—I mean, Lady Molyneux. She was the fifth daughter of a needy, drunken, half-pay lieutenant, who resided in the town, for the amusement of the inhabitants of which place, my brother and his friend exhibited themselves on the stage. She was fresh from a very second-rate boarding-school; very, very lovely, and very wild, but not very shy; she offered, without any scruple, to run away with my brother, (or rather Mr. Roberts, for that was his *nom de guerre,)* and to become his Polly or Lucy, whichever he chose. Charles declined so obliging a proposal, for which the lady owes him infinite gratitude. The following year Lord Molyneux, by some odd chance, met her, fell in love with and married her. In Lon-

don, my brother in his own character, and she in her assumed one, that of a woman of fashion, renewed their acquaintance; and as first impressions are most lasting, hers, as I have been informed, and indeed observed, neither her husband, nor, more strange, the world, could so entirely remove, but some lurking symptoms of partiality for *Macheath* would make their appearance.

"Tired at length of the unprofitable life he led, my brother resolved on a more rational mode of existence; and, as a preliminary step in the reformation he intended, accompanied Lord St. John and myself on a continental tour. We were two years absent, a period I always look back upon as the happiest of my life. I believe Charles was equally pleased. Lord St. John had made the grand tour in his youth, so the charm of novelty no longer existed for him; but I

should rather imagine, had that not been the case, his lordship never would have felt the same raptures as my brother and myself at fine scenery, statues, pictures, and buildings, which awakened in us sources of enjoyment we were before totally ignorant of, and which, I verily believe, would have made us continue abroad till now, had our motions not depended somewhat on Lord St. John, who, from being an older, or a wiser, or a duller traveller than his companions, was a less enthusiastic one,—home therefore we returned. My brother shortly after came into Parliament, replaced his poor friend D——'s loss, by forming his still existing friendship with Lord Delamore, and was made violent love to by Lady Molyneux. This flirtation was one which caused, for one London spring, some talk and some reports,—such as that they had eloped, and other pleasant

surmises, though I knew their falsehood: it was not agreeable to observe the credit, for at least twenty-four hours, they obtained—a credit which no one ventured to dispute but two or three, your husband and myself being of the number; but when the high-tide of London gets a character into its power, it is vain for two feeble creatures to attempt to stem the torrent; they may be overwhelmed themselves, but do little good to their friend.

"Such reports were only silenced by my brother and Lord Delamore leaving England, and by Lady Molyneux getting a new flirt. It was during Charles's absence, which was for some time, that I began to suspect, what I believe every one else was certain of, the embarrassment of my father's circumstances. He never mentioned his affairs, in any way however slight, to

his children; but I heard from various quarters of estates being sold, of money borrowed, dealings with Jews, &c. &c. which, however my father's continued gaiety and extravagance little corroborated, were occasional signs of distress. I began to be more seriously alarmed when the racing-stud was sold. Shortly after, my brother was summoned home. Still, of the full extent of Mr. Graham's positive ruin, I had not the least suspicion; and when at length informed of it, in a manner that left no longer room for doubt, no event could have astonished me more, or, when I considered my brother's fallen prospects, have rendered me more wretched. I shall not shock you with the detail of how my father's princely fortune had vanished: he himself never imagined the extent of the evil till all retrenchment was vain. Charles, on his arrival, strained every

nerve to place his affairs in some order, or to rescue something from the general wreck of property: his efforts were unavailing, and one thousand a year which he himself possessed in right of his mother, and which he made over to my father, was all that remained to a man who had found an annual income of forty thousand pounds inadequate for the half of his expenses. Mr. Graham became spiritless and gloomy; and though he had nothing to blame but his own folly, yet he assumed the air and language of an injured man. All his embarrassments arose from that "cursed horse who won the Derby—that confounded fellow who had had such a run of luck at cards—that abominable Jew who had made a fortune by his ruin;" and even he would descend to minor causes—his cooks, grooms, stewards, tailors, coachmakers, upholsterers, had all a hand in his undoing—exactly as if they had forced

themselves into his service and custom unsolicited.

"Branches was to be sold. Now, next to himself, my father loved his family mansion, which he had greatly contributed to render the princely residence it now is: to relinquish it, was a heavy blow, and he in vain sought some method of escaping the dreaded sacrifice. The Earl of Howard, who had travelled out of Northumberland to complete the purchase, threatened to break off the affair unless speedily arranged: my poor father had no alternative, and Charles was given full powers to conclude this melancholy transfer of property, provided some foolish right of shooting on some particular manors were granted my father. The possibility of any country gentleman yielding any point in which the sports of the field were concerned, was to my brother so hopeless an undertaking, that his sur-

prise was extreme at finding Lord Howard lend a very favourable ear to the proposition :—my brother, becoming more sanguine, pushed on his advantage, and found Lord Howard only the more accommodating, attentive, and obliging.—His conduct demands explanation.

" Lord Howard's family was good, but he himself was descended from a younger and very impoverished branch ; he became a soldier, lived hard, fought hard, was promoted slowly, and at the age of fifty, the Mr. Hume of his day having got the knowledge of the strength of the regiment, a battalion was sacrificed to the economist's zeal, and Lord Howard became almost a beggar.

" The higher branches, however, of the Howard family had been successively cut off by the hand of death, and Major Howard was then brought nearer and nearer to the head of the family ; the

births had been far less numerous than the mortality, and almost at the very moment the Major was reduced, he found himself, by the sudden exit of two far younger men than himself, possessed of the family title and estate. Having been always necessitated to lead an active but not an unsocial life, on becoming rich and independent, he thought the greatest enjoyment possible was to do nothing and see nobody; he accordingly retired with two maiden sisters to an old tumble-down castle in the North. Here, however recluse his life, he contrived to fall in love with the daughter of a poor curate; he married her, and she died of ennui, I suppose, poor soul! Lady Juliana was the fruit of this union; she became the idol and destined heiress of her father, and the *elève* of her aunts. As she grew towards womanhood, to find a husband for so ac-

complished, beautiful, and rich a young lady, was the object of all the anxious maidens' thoughts. They worried the old lord out of his life with speculations on this point, and with their alarms for fear she should be carried off by force by some needy fortune-hunter, or worse, love-stricken youth. The labourers in the garden were placed under a system of *espionage* by these charming old cats, for fear they should prove knights-errant in disguise; and a handsome ploughman was actually turned away, for having picked up and presented to the heiress of Howard Castle a glove she had lost.

"Not unwisely, Lord Howard coincided with his sisters, in thinking that a proper husband would be the best protection for his daughter, particularly as, at his period of life, any day might deprive her of that of a father. But a husband in the land they

lived in was not so easy to find: two males only, besides its inmates, ever passed the threshold of Howard Castle; the parson of the parish, and an ancient comrade of the Earl's with a wooden leg. The aunts hinted at a house in town; their brother would not hear of such a thing, but consented, at length, to take one more in the world than the Castle, and where the population of gentry was not so scanty. Branches was accordingly fixed on; and to conclude the purchase of which, Lord Howard dragged himself, his sisters, and his rara-avis of a daughter to the metropolis—a visit terribly fatal in its consequences to my poor brother! He had the misfortune, on a first interview, to please Lord Howard; on the second, what was far worse, to please his daughter; and what was worse than all, he pleased the aunts as they caught sight

of him coming up-stairs. The result of such united favour, was the offer from Lord Howard of his daughter in marriage, with Branches Park and all its broad lands for her dower. 'By that means,' said Lord Howard to my brother, 'your father may still inhabit his own house, and I may return to Howard Castle. I shall not leave my daughter unprotected when I die, nor your father nor yourself unprovided for, and you may be saved ruining your constitution in the East Indies, whither I hear you intended to accompany Lord ———.'

Now, my brother cared not for wealth, though he liked independence. Lady Juliana and all her money were not only indifferent, but disagreeable to him; he was resigned to the loss of fortune, and looked forward with rather pleasure than otherwise to visiting the East.—Yet he married!—My father wept, im-

plored, threatened,—the fortune and fame of his family were in his hands,—to refuse such an offer would be the most unheard-of selfishness, to accept it the most noble disinterestedness. Charles listened to his arguments, hesitated, and complied,—most unwillingly complied. I was not present at the sacrifice, I dared not trust myself: I knew too well his feelings, and I knew my own, and, I may add, I knew my father's! The delight he experienced and did not conceal, of again having the means of continuing, to a degree, his customary course of life, without ever adverting to the price which was to be paid, was to me so truly shocking, that my brother's sorrow would have been less painful to witness than my father's joy.

The events of life are uncertain; I left London to avoid the ceremony, for a tour of a few weeks, during which the news of my father's death reached me—it took

place suddenly at Branches. This event put my poor brother's self-command to a high trial, and destroyed the little happiness his marriage had given him—the having replaced my father in affluence and content; to which was added, the but too natural reflections, that had his marriage been delayed a few weeks, it would probably never have taken place at all, and that how disproportionate the sacrifice had been to the short-lived satisfaction it had procured! The excuse of our mutual loss requiring mutual consolation, induced my brother to visit me alone. It was then, for once, he ventured to open his heart to me, and disclosed his private and hopeless sorrows, and the little prospect of happiness his marriage gave cause to expect; all evils doubly embittered by that sense of rectitude, which to a sensitive mind is a perpetual goad; when the duties en-

joined are more painful than pleasing—the result of principle not of feeling. He remained with me ten days. We have often since had much confidential discourse, but he is silent on the subject of his matrimonial griefs. I could wish his silence proceeded from having found his lot a happier one than he had anticipated; but the more I see and know of Lady Juliana, the less probable does it appear that such should be the case. She loves my brother—she might adore him—the being fond of him, however, is the only merit she possesses."

"Do not you imagine," said Caroline, when Lady St. John ceased, "that such attachment may have won upon so kind a heart as your brother's, and that that cheerful, happy air he always wears may not be for outward show, but the true picture of his mind?"

"It may be so," replied Lady St.

John; "and perhaps I ought to say, I hope it is so. Charles is not, however, a petted child to spurn every good gift of fortune, because the one most prized is denied him. He can value the blessings of health, wealth, children, and friends, though united to a woman incapable of exciting either love or esteem. I know what he once was: he is not changed; his feelings were and are romantic and warm—they are now controlled, not subdued; he lives out of the world, because he dreads their influence; he engages in every pursuit with an ardour the pursuit rarely justifies — it is because he dreads their influence, that their delusive voice should ever unnerve his high-strung purpose. He always loved the sports of the field, and books; but now they seem joined to the pleasures of benevolence, his only sources of happiness. And

were he, by some unfortunate chance, to be incapacitated from taking violent exercise, reading, or visiting the sick and poor, I verily believe no human being would be more miserable than my brother.—But, my dear Lady Delamore," continued Lady St. John, rising, "you look so grave, that I really repent having let you into my brother's history:—*if Lord Dorset* were here, there is no punishment short of death he would not think I deserved, for bringing a shade upon your lovely countenance: to repair the mischief as much as I possibly can, I must, before I depart, make a confession, which perhaps may restore your smiles. When I lamented myself, that my brother but once had confided to me his domestic distresses, I ought in honour to have mentioned, that I had no one to blame but myself."

"The reason being," said Caroline,

smiling, "Que les femmes gardent mieux leurs secrets que celui des autres."

"Not at all, I assure you, but worse a great deal. I happened to stumble, one unlucky day, on some verses, which thinking somewhat analogous to my brother's situation, I set to a favourite air of his, and sung one evening at Branches. Lord St. John was asleep and did not hear them; Lady Juliana was awake and did not understand them; Charles both heard and understood them; and, from that day to this, has hardly ever mentioned his wife's name to me, or asked me to sing:—the first I am sorry for; the latter I cannot regret, for his superior knowledge of music made me always perform before him in fear and anxiety. To show you the extent of my crime, I must repeat the verses, which when you have heard, I dare

say you will hate me for ever having had the impudence to sing or say; not but that I imagined to divert my brother."

"Oh! I 'll reform; I will; I swear!
To Hymen I 'll address my vows,
And I 'll instruct my son and heir,
And tend my sheep, and milk my cows,
And dose and fatten with my spouse!

And now the rustic's toil I 'll share,
And wield the fork, and trail the rake;
And at the sermon sit and stare,
Till dull observers shall mistake,
And fancy I am broad awake.

And I will taste the sportsman's joys,
With hounds and guns pursue my prey;
And find such rapture in a noise,
That all the wondering squires shall say,
I am as wise and bless'd as they.

Then to the festive hall I 'll pass,
And in the jovial chorus join;
And sick'ning o'er th' unfinish'd glass,
I 'll swear our pleasures are divine,
When dulness is improved by wine."

The author of these lines will be easily discoverable to the *learned* reader. Lady St. John having sung them with more comic action than voice, dropped a grotesque curtsey, and covering her face with her handkerchief, as if ashamed of her performance, made a precipitate retreat.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE entrance of her boy aroused Caroline from a fit of musing, into which Lady St. John's narrative had thrown her. Caroline adored her child; but her love was not unattended with vexation, to which Lord Delamore's alarm, for fear she should spoil him, gave rise; and in his presence her caresses were never given but in trembling, for fear they should accelerate the dreaded period of sending him to school, of which, tender as was his age, his father already talked, for his mental and bodily pre-

servation, as he expressed it. Whether Lord Delamore's gravity alarmed the child, who was of a gentle and timid disposition, or that he had imbibed from his mother those feelings of awe, which but too strongly dwelt upon her mind with regard to her husband at the period of his birth, it is difficult to say: but his fear no power could subdue; he shrunk from his glance, seeking refuge ever in the bosom of his mother, as if alarmed by some fearful sight. Lord Delamore was hurt at his child's alarms, and resolved to find a cause; attributed such distrust to Caroline's instructions, an opinion he did not scruple to avow, thus converting Caroline's solitary domestic good into a source of unjust suspicion and distress. Lord Delamore was not an unkind man: he was humane and religious; he knew and practised his duty both to God and man;

but of that towards woman he was unmindful or neglectful. Yet in the great day of account, our sins of omission as well as commission will be remembered; and the man who never let the beggar go from his gate unrelieved, who was not unmindful of the meanest brute beneath his roof, and who knelt morning and evening with his family in prayer, may tremble when the wounded, despised heart of her who was given him to succour, cherish, and protect, is laid open to his view: constancy cannot cover a multitude of sins. "Human life," as the admirable Paley observes, "is more embittered by affronts than by injuries."

Whether Lady Delamore's manner somewhat betrayed the interest Mr. Graham's history had excited, or that he grew weary of avoiding her, and was constrained to relinquish a system safe

though irksome, is of little moment to inquire.

By slow degrees their intimacy increased,—by slow degrees their various talents and acquirements unfolded themselves to each other, and by slow degrees their similarity of tastes and disposition discovered itself. Music, that captivating talent, Graham, since his marriage, had been totally unmindful of. His wife had neither knowledge of, nor fondness for, the art; and he willingly resigned a pleasure, which soon ceases to be one when pursued alone, and, however enchanting, is little calculated to cheer or invigorate the mind in solitude or sadness, in which it has a tendency to drive a man of sensibility to despair. Excepting, therefore, in his walks or rides, when some once familiar air would cross his mind, and, spite of himself, gain utterance,

bringing with it "visions of long-departed joys," the voice of song was never heard at Branches since the day recorded by Lady St. John, until Caroline's musical talents again aroused in its master a passion which had long lain dormant. Well would it have been if no other passion had been aroused at the same time.*

On Lady St. John's departure, Caroline and Graham seemed obliged to console each other for a loss they both felt. As the spring advanced, constant dinner parties took place, into which Lady Juliana entered passively, and Lord Delamore with the highest delight.

* Let those who would keep two youthful hearts asunder, beware of music. Oh! this leaning over chairs, and conning the same music-book, and entwining of voices, and melting away in harmonies! —the German waltz is nothing to it.

Bracebridge Hall, page 313.

The more Caroline saw of Mr. Graham, the more convinced she became, that Lady St. John's was no exaggerated portrait; but if one thing more than another particularly pleased her, it was his attention to his wife—most striking in the contrast it afforded to Lord Delamore's behaviour. Lady Juliana was proud, dull, self-sufficient, and ignorant; and in no one instance did Graham's manner ever betray how conscious he was that such was the case. Polite, attentive, and considerate, never assuming the lover, but always kind and good-humoured—the last quality was often brought into requisition, for Lady Juliana, the spoilt child of two narrow-minded old women, indulged in as many whims and caprices as any lady could well do, whose sphere of action was not very extended, who was Graham's wife, and moreover of an ex-

tremely indolent disposition. One of her whims happened, in her husband's ideas, to be a rather fortunate circumstance—a violent dislike to London. The year after their marriage, they spent some time there; and, not meeting with the consideration she expected from the ladies of fashion, declared she would return no more. Her husband did not attempt to combat such a resolve. In the country, and with such society as the country affords, Lady Juliana would pass off very well. Her name, her height, and her wealth, made her a person of consideration: in London, such qualifications were nothing, or at least nothing in the society into which Graham introduced her. She had no tact, though haughty;—no manners, no wit, no taste, no conversation, no information;—in short, nobody cared or thought about her; and most of Gra-

ham's friends, male and female, did not see why he was to care or think about her, or at least why he was not to follow a very general example, namely, leave her to go her way, while he went his. Three qualities which Graham eminently possessed, prevented him from following a system which, however convenient, was at variance with humanity, honour, and gratitude; for, however mistaken in the means, gratitude was due to Lord Howard, who, in bestowing on him his daughter, thought to present him with every earthly good; and who, in making him joint heir with Lady Juliana, of all his property, gave at his death a moving proof of his affection, as well as of his reliance on the character of his son-in-law.

For five months had one of the gayest, most fashionable of women, been the inhabitant of a gloomy, retired, una-

dorned spot, with no amusement but such as was to be derived from books, exercise, the company of a taciturn and not loving husband, a child, a dull female neighbour, and — the husband of that neighbour! And yet this gay and handsome lady thought three months of the five the happiest of her married life. She knew not herself how to account for the case: sometimes she imagined her pleasure solely consisted in reading; at others, that it was riding; or that Lord Delamore, obviously a happier being than formerly, rendered her so. None of these was the secret of her contentment; and however for a long time ignorant of the cause, it was in Graham that the pleasure of Caroline's residence at Highwood consisted. It was he who banished that monster ennui,—who soothed her sorrows, who understood her feelings, and participated in her tastes. It was he who presented

happiness to Caroline, under the most amiable of all forms, even superior to love,—under that of friendship. Amiable as is the form, it is also dangerous, when the parties are of different sexes, young and married, and most particularly when they are both suffering disappointment in their wedded state; when both have strong feelings unemployed, and lastly, when such friendship is nourished far from a busy, distracting, observing world, where, whatever its other dangers, its votaries are not likely to fall victims to any which have their origin in sensibility or tenderness of disposition—the excess of such feelings is like the deadly night-shade, which blossoms in obscurity.

Caroline's eyes were somewhat opened to her partiality for Mr. Graham, when about to leave Highwood. Then it was impossible for her to imagine that regret at absenting herself from Highwood,

could be caused by the loss of any attraction, in Highwood itself. From the reflections which this discovery occasioned, she was aroused by him who was so much connected with her thoughts. Graham entered with the air of one to whom a kind reception was familiar.

"Is Lady Delamore for a walk or a ride, this beautiful morning?—But you are not well. What is the matter? Tell me, I beg of you."

"Nothing of a more alarming nature," replied Caroline, looking down, "than that on Thursday we depart for London."

Graham started, and walked to the window.

"Well, I suppose I should congratulate you on the prospect of pleasure which London must hold out to a young and beautiful lady like yourself, after so long a seclusion from its delights."

Caroline was silent; her countenance gave very little manifestation that the felicitations were well-timed. Graham regarded her intently.—"Perhaps," he continued, "you may dread the confined air of London on Elliot's account:—he who has certainly done justice to the air of Highwood, may languish at the change."

"No," said Lady Delamore at length, "for once Elliot was not in my thoughts—self alone occupied me. I am fond of the country, the retired quiet life we have led here has completely won my heart; I dread the change; and if it was not for the pleasure of seeing Lucy Fitz-Edward, I could almost wish to remain in this gloomy house all the year round."

"It would not be a gloomy house then.—Would that your idea were likely to be acted upon!"

"Why, if it were," said Caroline

archly, " we should see so much of each other, that a final rupture would sure to be the case."

" It is as well perhaps to think so," sighed Graham.

" Is there no chance," inquired Caroline, " of our meeting in town?"

" None in the world: I have forsworn London and all its delights; my lot is cast in the country, amongst the ignorant and dull of the earth, with whom I must vegetate contentedly,—with whom I did vegetate contentedly, until——"

" Until when?" demanded Caroline; " why pause?"

" Until Delamore and yourself opened my eyes, and showed me that—that my state was capable of improvement."

" Alas!" said Caroline, " there are very few states which are not so."

Graham looked at her with an eye of

pity. "Lady Delamore, before we part, I have a confession to make you; but before I acknowledge my sin, I wish to secure your pardon."

"What heinous offence have you committed?—Lost the key of the garden gate, or broken my newly purchased china jar?"

"The key and the jar are safe;—my crime lies in having accidentally heard a soliloquy of yours."

"Heavens! the evening of our arrival here?"

"Even so. You may remember you arrived the day before you were expected; Delamore had asked me to overlook the preparations for your arrival; according to his lordship's wishes, as I was groping about to see if the fires were lighted and the windows closed, I stumbled upon your fair self musing by the fire-side."

"And heard from my lips what was never breathed to human ear before. Next to Lucy, you are the person I would perhaps most willingly trust; but on such a subject it is best to have no confidant: for married griefs there is no redress; they must be endured in silence and in sorrow." As Caroline spoke, the tears started to her eyes.

"Poor thing!" said Graham; "we are each sufferers; we should confide in, and console each other."

"Our cases are not exactly similar: you married, as I have been told, without any great prospect of felicity; I was foolish enough to fancy Lord Delamore in love with me."

"Strange infatuation! that he should not have been!"

"Oh!" replied Caroline, assuming a gayer air, "there is no accounting for tastes; but when you compare yourself

in future to me, I beg you will throw the preponderance of misery into my scale:—your wife could not live without you; my husband, if we were parted for a week, would, I verily believe, forget my existence."

The last evening before they left Highwood, the Delamores dined at Branches; all but Lady Juliana were sad—she was just as usual. On taking leave, Caroline promised to write to Graham.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE meeting of friends after a long absence is as a balm to the spirits; for a time, all griefs are hushed, and the pleasure of the moment banishes care. Such was the case on the first interview which Caroline had with Miss Fitz-Edward upon her arrival in town; and the latter, discoursing of it with her aunt, describes Caroline as in great beauty and excellent spirits.

Subsequent observation, however, convinced her that in the last circumstance she was mistaken. Caroline, so far from being in spirits, was melancholy and

absent; Lucy sought for the cause, and not unnaturally imputed it to Lord Delamore. "He was always neglectful," thought she, "now he is unkind;" but still she observed no proofs that such was the case. Caroline's manner was altered to him; but his to her was very much what it had ever been.

Lucy questioned Lady Delamore with the freedom of a friend, but only received answers which attributed the state of her spirits to complaints of her nerves,—to her dislike of London, &c. &c.;—in short, she talked as hundreds have talked, and will talk again, when the secret disorder is in *or near* the heart. A faint suspicion of the truth gradually unfolded itself to Lucy's mind. There were colourings when Graham's name was mentioned,—a disinclination to talk of him,—a desire that they should be considered as little acquainted, when they

were intimate enough to correspond,—which raised in Lucy's gentle bosom a feeling of alarm; a feeling which returned at intervals, and at each time with greater force.

Notwithstanding the great friendship between Caroline and her cousin, they were—which is not, however, a remarkable case—in many respects dissimilar in character, and excepting in one respect, that of being early left orphans, they were also very dissimilar in fortunes. Lucy's character had been formed in the school of adversity; from her earliest years she had been witness to scenes of sickness and sorrow. Such, however, are not unfavourable to the developement of the human mind; they bring forth powers which might otherwise lie dormant; they awaken tenderness and activity of spirit, command patience and forbearance, and conquer selfishness, the bane

of prosperity. With her parents, Lucy seemed to lose every good on earth; they were sick and poor, but they loved each other, and loved their children; when they were gone, had it not been for a poor little sister, too young to know her loss, Lucy would have seemed to stand alone in the world. The behaviour of her family was not of a kind to diminish her sorrows; and a sense of dependence upon them, increased the seriousness of a disposition always tending to reflection.

Early brought up in habits of expense by his father, the Marquis of Gauntlet, Lord Robert Fitz-Edward (the father of Lucy) knew not the want or value of money until his death; then, when he received the pittance which fell to his share of that sum settled on younger children at the marriage of his parents, the idea first came across his

mind, that such means were very inadequate to support the life he had ever led, with his father's house and purse at command. Still he found it difficult to relinquish the habits he had acquired: his embarrassments consequently increased rapidly during his life, and left his two girls at his death dependent on the hearts of those who had no thoughts or hearts but for themselves, until Lady Mary Walters took upon herself to feel and act with regard to them for the rest of the family, and for her life placed them in affluence and happiness.

Lucy was handsome, and, in the society in which she moved, had admirers; but, though cheerful, she wanted that spring of life which, when joined with beauty, makes the irresistible charm of youth, and which she had lost long before the world knew her. The men thought her indifferent; the women

said she was *blue*. The first she decidedly was not; a warm heart is often concealed beneath a calm exterior, and in the inmost recesses of Lucy's bosom dwelt a strength of feeling which, however heretofore unexerted by any more violent affection than friendship, was capable of being awakened to the most devoted passion. As to the term *blue*, it was much misused if meant to place Lucy on the same level with the De Staëls, Edgworths, or Austins of her day. She was well informed; her father had given her all he had to bestow—every advantage of education: she knew more than the generality of her sex; still she was not a blue-stocking, or ambitious to have the character of learned.

"My dear," said Lady Mary Walters one day to her niece, "I am so glad to find that Lady Delamore discourages extremely Lord Dorset this year."

"I am glad you think it a fortunate circumstance."

"Why, do not you?"

"You know, my dear aunt, I never partook in your alarms about Lord Dorset's attentions to Caroline: however, I am not sorry that the busy world no longer have their flirtation to canvass, although I fear . . . . " Lucy stopped abruptly.

"Fear what?" inquired Lady Mary.

Lucy smiled languidly. "I fear a man I never saw, and hardly ever heard Caroline name. You will think me the most suspicious of people, when I tell you whence proceed my misgivings. Mr. Graham is the person—Lord Delamore's friend,—the volatile Lady St. John's brother."

"The father of this Graham," said Lady Mary thoughtfully, "was a very profligate character; but, my dear Lucy,

what foundation have you for such suspicions?—The world, do they talk?"

"Oh! Heaven be praised! no, and God grant they never may! No human being but myself suspects, what, after all, I had better not have mentioned, even to you, from whom I conceal nothing. Caroline is most dear to me, and I fear my anxiety makes me foolishly alive to whatever may endanger her peace. At one time, her letters spoke frequently of this Graham; she is out of spirits, but now never mentions him, though she constantly has letters from him; and she who was the most idle of correspondents, seems to me now to live with a pen in her hand, as if all her occupation was to answer his epistles."

"And all this without Lord Delamore's knowledge?"

"Oh, no; it was from Lord Dela-

more I heard of their correspondence; he spoke of it with seeming satisfaction."

"Do you know what sort of a man Mr. Graham is,—how he is spoken of in the world?"

"The world," said Lucy rather bitterly, "pronounces him a more moral man than his father. Lady St. John deems him to be perfection itself, but unhappy in marriage." And with these words the conversation ended.

From the dread of what people might think, Lady Delamore did not exclude herself long from society; and after she had been a little time in London in comparative solitude, she altered her course, and again assumed the appearance of her former light-hearted, dissipated self. She succeeded so well as to deceive the world, and in some measure to believe herself, that the tem-

porary animation which society imparts to the spirits, was the whole extent of the pleasure the world ever had given her,—ever could give her. She was still decidedly the fashion, nor was it likely she should ever be otherwise; for, if her beauty were to fail, she had still rank, wit, and wealth, to support her claim to popular favour, and moreover the reputation of personal charms, which, in the failure of the substance, does nearly as well:—"Once a beauty, always a beauty." That dread of losing ground in the world, which has haunted many an admired fair one, gave no disturbance to Caroline's mind: she moved in society, as if society were made for her; the adulation she hourly received was no small assistance to such delusion, if deluded she was.

About the end of July, the newspapers announced the departure of the

Countess of Delamore and Lord Elliot, for Bognor Rocks; and for once the newspapers spoke truth: but the reason why her ladyship chose to establish herself in an inconvenient house, in a strange place, by an element she had no remarkable passion for, and without an acquaintance to speak to,—neither the editor of the paper, nor the world, nor perhaps herself, could say; this alone she knew—that she was glad to delay her return to Highwood.

A solitary ramble by the sea-shore is a great promoter of reflection and self-examination; and Lady Delamore did reflect, and pushed the mental scrutiny, until her whole heart lay open to her view, and she discovered that her friendship with Graham had been carried far enough to make it desirable that it should proceed no further. She had not fascinated the hearts of half London

to so little purpose as to be ignorant of her power; she had not read devotion in so many eyes as to be unable to interpret the language which Graham's had often spoken, and which a little encouragement might make him deliver in more palpable terms. "He is too good to be made unhappy," thought Caroline; "and his lot is not so fortunate as that he can spare any of his small portion of felicity. We may compassionate each other, but perhaps it would be as well if we had never met—were never to meet again."

Lady Delamore returned to Highwood: her manner to Mr. Graham was cold, distant, and reserved. This self-imposed restraint rendered Highwood disagreeable, her life melancholy, and Mr. Graham miserable. He, however, did not submit long in silence to her altered behaviour, and, the first opportunity, de-

manded in what he had offended. Caroline was taken by surprise; and, after a little hesitation, declared her dislike of a country life, which put her out of humour with every body and every thing. She then, to follow up the farce, began a warm panegyric upon London, which she had not however power to conclude, and stopped, ashamed of her own duplicity. Graham, supposing that her disinclination to continue proceeded from repugnance at expressing dislike of a rural life, to one doomed to no better an existence, and extremely surprised as well as shocked at sentiments so different from any he had ever heard her utter, begged her to proceed, with a countenance sufficiently indicative of his feelings.

Caroline was silent:—it is more than probable, had she continued in the same strain, that her end would have soon been gained, and that Graham's ad-

miration would have fallen very low indeed.

But there was that in his countenance, —a half-sorrowful, half-contemptuous look,—which Caroline but too well understood; and she would have been more than woman, could she have endured such a look from the man she valued, when but one word was wanting, on her part, instantly to change it.

The word was said;—Graham's eyes sparkled with delight—more than a word ensued—Caroline thought she said nothing; but she said, or gave to be understood, every thing—all that she wished to conceal. Graham laughed.

"Lord Dorset was right, then, when he called you prude: well, I am glad I am instructed as to the behaviour of ladies to gentlemen; and since the new lights I have received, I shall certainly keep a very strict watch upon Lady Ju-

liana's actions. My first step shall be committing to the flames a certain green-and-pink purse, which she has been toiling at so long to present to Delamore. Who knows what might ensue from such a mark of attention?"

Caroline coloured.—"Spare your raillery, I implore, or you will make me angry."

"That I do not believe to be possible. But, my dear Lady Delamore, I honour and comprehend your feelings, but only in moderation. Do not sacrifice a friend to a mistaken sense of decorum; for the world, which you are so desirous to please, will give you nothing as an equivalent. Friends are not so plentiful as to be cast away as a garment: a good name, Lady Delamore, may be purchased too dearly."

"But a good name may be so easily lost!" exclaimed Caroline. "Is it possible for me to be too cautious, when I

know the thousand ill-natured things which were said with regard to me and Lord Dorset? Now, though I bear him no ill-will; yet, should I never meet him again, I should hardly discover his absence: and this man, my *very* good friends gave me credit for having an intrigue with. How circumspect, then, should the conduct of women be, if they would wish to escape being classed with those who are a disgrace to their sex!"

"Circumspect!" exclaimed Graham contemptuously; "say rather, apathetic. Good Heavens! your own evidence proclaims your error. How can those who harbour a thought against such purity as yours, be worthy of consideration? Let me be your friend, your brother, your servant: whatever my station, do not neglect me. I will see you as seldom as you please; once a month, once a year; but, in pity to a poor wretch who has

no great stock of happiness to play with, let our meeting be in kindness."

"I do not know how it can well ever be otherwise," said Caroline, extending her hand: "but we differ with regard to the opinion of the world. I do not despise, never can despise it; and it is as well perhaps such should be the case, for *l'intérêt que l'on accuse de tous nos crimes, mérite souvent d'être loué de nos bonnes actions.*"

"You need not such a maxim," observed Graham.

"I am glad you think so, and will try to merit your good opinion."

"You merit the good opinion and admiration of all who know you."

"My lord and master excepted," said Caroline laughing. "Could not you infuse a little of your fire into his frigid bosom?—you are silent:—nothing but I suppose Theresa's spirit . . . . ."

"Theresa!—and what know you of Theresa?"

"Every thing; but not till I had been married four long years:—and now, tell me, was she very lovely, very clever, very agreeable?"

Graham smiled at her earnestness. "To answer your questions categorically, she was very handsome; and though lively enough when she liked, yet in general she had a tender, languid, thoughtful air. She was too fair a beauty to please me; and there was something too much of *abandon* in her manner;—and, if you will pardon the observation, I should have liked her better as a mistress than a wife. Clever she was not; but the Italian air breathes insincerity; and I often suspected that she had not escaped the infection, and so far had ability; even in her apparently most unguarded moments, there was a

caution about her I could not endure, and prevented my thinking her agreeable: others were of a different opinion."

"The Comte d'Harcourt, for instance; he must have been very much in love to have accepted her hand in the manner he did."

"He was very much in love, and Theresa not less so."

"Heavens! what do you mean?"

"Why, I mean simply, that Miss Greville was very well content to marry M. d'Harcourt, who was the last man in the world who would have united himself to a woman without her own free will. Her father was equally incapable of forcing his daughter's inclinations, and he himself told me how expeditiously the marriage was concluded, at the request of Theresa as well as of Harcourt."

"It appears, then, Lord Delamore's love met no very adequate return."

"Miss Greville was attached to him: her sending for him on her death-bed proves it. She was one of those tender beings with hearts easily lost, and easily recovered. As long as Delamore had no rivals, she was as fond as possible of him; but the instant she heard the voice of love, or, I might say, only saw the look of admiration from any other, then would her heart begin to show symptoms of rebellion, and most decidedly broke from its loyalty, before so captivating a conqueror as Harcourt. Had he not neglected her after her marriage, I suspect the Comtesse d'Harcourt would never once have regretted not being Countess of Delamore. It was a sick room, and a negligent husband, which brought to her mind the kind, devoted being, whose affection she had probably too little prized."

"Do you know any thing of her father, Mr. Greville, now?"

"A report reached England a year or two back, of his having been seen at Petersburgh, looking very old, though devoted to a French Opera-dancer;—if he has ever written to me since our parting at Paris, his letters have not reached me; a circumstance I do not regret, as in the war in which we are at present engaged, it is not an Englishman's place to be away from his country, consulting more his pleasure, than his honour, or the glory of his nation."

CHAPTER XV.

After the conversation which concluded the last chapter, to receive Graham otherwise than with kindness, Caroline thought to be out of the question; and such kindness was of a nature fatally to endanger his peace. For the present moment, however, they were happy. Caroline again closed her eyes to the danger of a friend so tender, yet respectful; so cheerful, yet so feeling. Graham laughed at the idea of danger, yet, in fact, was not unaware that the passion he felt was warmer than that of friendship; for otherwise, why that emo-

tion, which her presence excited, that thrill in his veins created by her voice? Strong in his own, strong in her principles, heedless of what might ensue, he boldly sought her society, as that of a person he most admired, most delighted in; who again raised in his mind feelings of happiness, which, since his unfortunate marriage, he had never known.

Lord Delamore, occupied with hunting, farming, or lamenting her he had lost, thought not of his wife, and therefore could not be jealous. He was, however, of far too high-minded a nature to be *easily* susceptible of so mean a passion, had not his indifference been a very effectual barrier to its intrusion; which indifference afforded, under the form of pity, a far too plausible excuse for Graham to bestow attentions on Caroline; who, in receiving them, knew she gave pain to none, though pleasure to one.

Lady Juliana was neither high-minded nor indifferent, and was moreover extremely prone to suspicion ; but her jealous eyes had long been directed elsewhere—to the neighbouring clergyman's family, who have been already named. All the attention which Graham paid to Mr. Watkins, as a matter of course from the situation he held, and as a matter of feeling from the exemplary manner he conducted himself in that situation ;—all the assistance he rendered him for the improvement of his parish, and maintenance of his family,—for Watkins, like many others of the clergy, was richer in knowledge and progeny than in worldly store,—was by Lady Juliana construed as arising from the influence of his handsome daughters. The marriage and consequent removal of the eldest, the one peculiarly dreaded, had a little diminished her fears, and, in the

vacancy of mind thereby occasioned, she might have fixed her eyes upon Lady Delamore, had not Lady St. John's observation, that not only Mary Watkins's sleepy eyes were a hundred times more dangerous than her sister Susan's bright ones, but that little Hester promised to be the greatest beauty that ever was seen, again raised suspicion in Lady Juliana's mind, and led back her thoughts to the old subject of complaint.

Lady St. John was one of those people who discover more in half a glance, than their less observant neighbours can do by the full exertion of their eyes and ears in the course of years. On the first coming to Highwood of the Delamores, she, in her own mind, predicted that so fascinating a neighbour as Caroline would become an object of interest to her brother. Though not an immoral woman, and perfectly correct in her own conduct,

there was a great mixture with regard to bad and good in her ideas: what she would not do herself, she would forgive others for; and when she liked any one, all faults were pardoned—the person exonerating the crime. Her brother might act as he chose,—she would never blame him;—and if he fell in love with Lady Delamore, it would be a pity; but, poor fellow! considering his odious wife, it would be a very natural circumstance.

In Lady St. John's idea, love was not that whirlwind of the passions described by poets: she was too much of a philosopher ever to have felt this: she deemed the tender passion to be a very obedient, circumspect feeling, better known by the word *flirtation*. If, therefore, Mr. Graham *flirted* with Lady Delamore, it would be unfortunate that his wife's jealousy should interfere with

so agreeable a pastime; and accordingly, it was not without design that she brought forward the charms of the Watkins family:—these were a kind of *bug-bear* for her sister-in-law to feed her alarms upon, and prevent her glances from penetrating to Highwood.

The following year, when Lady St. John visited Branches, she had every reason to be satisfied with her penetration, and also to be highly amused (as a sportsman would express it, and which I beg my female and gentle readers to skip,) at Lady Juliana's still hanging on the stale scent—the wicked eyes of the Watkins girls.

"Charles is always going to the Parsonage:—I heard him three times last week order his horse to meet him at Mr. Watkins's paddock gate, and he is always going that way with a book or a roll of

music in his hand:"—so Lady Juliana complained. Lady St. John's smiles were to herself. The shortest way to Highwood was through Mr. Watkins's paddock!

Lady St. John's departure was rather a relief to Caroline—her glances were keen and distressing; her ridicule of Lady Juliana was not at all to Lady Delamore's taste, when meant as encouragement to her brother in his attentions to herself, which it somewhat startled her to find could be matter of observation even to eyes as keen as Lady St. John's: however, she comforted herself with the thought, that but a very few gifted individuals shared such microscopic power equally with her ladyship. Shortly after her departure, Lucy Fitz-Edward arrived at Highwood:—the following was written during the course of her visit.

TO LADY MARY WALTERS.

" DEAREST AUNT,

" In my letter from this place, you probably have looked, but looked in vain, for a name which, as yet, I have had discretion enough not to mention, fearing to hazard an opinion on the truth or falsehood of surmises, which to you, and you alone, I ventured to breathe, and which I would to Heaven I could pronounce an idle phantom of the brain. Such, alas ! is not the case ; and this Graham, much as I feared before I knew him, is, now I am acquainted with him, a far more dangerous character than I expected.

" But you must not mistake me ; it is not his vices I dread, for from them Caroline can have no fear : it is from his virtues. He is too amiable and too agree-

ble, for even the most cold-hearted not to be drawn towards him; and Caroline is not cold-hearted. The greatest friendship exists between them, unmixed with any thing of coquetry or flirtation, but a simple, plain, undisguised feeling, carried on with all good faith, sincerity, openness, and propriety, which would be as harmless as that of children, were they not both unhappy in marriage. Thence come all my shudderings and fears: it is that which gives a romantic air to their friendship, which they neither attempt to discourage or command.

"As you wished to have a very particular account of Lady Juliana, I will describe the first visit she paid here after my arrival, and which indeed is the only time I have seen her; for she has not left the house since, being one of those people who, having little to do, make their health their principal occupation

and interest. Her society cannot be accounted a loss. Caroline had said so little of either of her neighbours, that I was left entirely to form my own judgment; and accordingly, on their being announced at dinner the second day after my arrival, I turned my eyes most eagerly to the door. In, accordingly, walked Lady Juliana, followed by Mr. Graham. She is large and tall, rather a handsome face, without a particularly pleasing countenance. I know you do not like to have dress brought forward as an argument for or against any one, and I believe you are right, as a general rule; yet, in this particular case, I must venture to describe that of Lady Juliana. It was in a vulgar style, too short and too scanty; and her very ample bosom was far too much exposed to be pleasing to my eye, however covered with jewels and chains of gold; particularly as her situa-

tion was such as, I suppose, would render her appearance more considerable than customary. Of this situation, but little doubt could exist; for she complained so bitterly of the roughness of the road over which she had just travelled, that I saw a smile upon almost every countenance present, excepting Mr. Graham's, who looked more inclined to groan. After a short pause, she desired her husband to give her her salts; and upon his saying that he had not got them, she put on an air of displeasure, and murmured: —'How cruel! you know I cannot exist without them.' Mr. Graham was looking at a paragraph, which Lord Delamore had given him to read in the newspaper, and did not attend to her remarks, which produced a repetition of them, in too audible a tone to be unheeded; and he begged her to send for them from home, if she wanted them. No answer

was vouchsafed, and Mr. Graham resumed his newspaper. Lady Juliana then turned to a lady who was sitting by her, and asked her if she admired the curtains? The lady, with all due politeness, pronounced them beautiful. 'Do you?' said Lady Juliana; 'I don't, I hate red; when I first married, the furniture of my bed-chamber at Branches was red. I was miserable when I saw the room appointed for me, and insisted upon having another prepared for me; but somehow my orders were not attended to; and in the room I was obliged to sleep, till the arrival of an upholsterer from London, who altered all the hangings to pink:—the furniture, however, is not entirely pink; the bed-curtains are lined with yellow.'

"This important fact having brought Lady Juliana's speech to a close, Caroline thought it time to interfere, and inquired

if she had had a pleasant dinner, at some place which she named. 'Oh dear, no, not at all.—I declare, Mr. Dorien is the stupidest man in the world. Imagine his taking a *little* dowager, Lady Foster, some Lord Foster's wife, into dinner before me! To be sure, Mrs. Dorien was very much shocked, and made a thousand apologies after dinner was over. But what good does that do me? I and this *little* Lady Foster may never again be in company together, whilst before fourteen persons . . . .' Here she was suddenly interrupted:—Mr. Graham had been evidently suffering torture at every word which proceeded out of the mouth of his lady; and, unable to endure more, seized the poker to mend the fire. So actively did he set to work, that he knocked down the shovel and tongs; in attempting to reinstate which, he trod on the foot of a fat spaniel asleep on the

rug:—the dog barked, Caroline laughed, Graham apologized, Lady Juliana scolded,—all was noise and confusion during the short time which intervened before dinner was announced; and the voice of Lady Juliana was only heard in the general chorus.

"When seated at table, I was far removed from her ladyship's neighbourhood. After dinner we were thrown together, every body else being either engaged at cards, or assembled round the piano-forte, where Caroline and Mr. Graham were singing. After some trifling discourse, Lady Juliana suddenly asked me if I thought Lady Delamore handsome? Not a little surprised at the question, I answered, 'Particularly so.' 'Do you?' said she; 'well, I do not; I never think any body good-looking, who is not of a certain height and size. To be sure, she made a great marriage—

without sixpence, to marry an Earl—such a *little* woman!'—I was nearly laughing, but replied,—'She might have made a greater, however; for Lord Dorset, who proposed to her, is heir apparent to a Marquisate.'—'Lord Dorset; that is the man she is always flirting with in town.' I felt angry, and in answer told her, I was surprised she could listen to so gossiping a report, of which her knowledge of Lady Delamore ought to convince her of the injustice. 'It was Mrs. Bennet told me, and thus accounted for Lord Delamore's gravity.' I lifted up my eyes with astonishment; but, too provoked to answer her, walked away to the piano-forte.

"Having given you, in farming phrase, a fair sample of my lady, I shall turn to a very different person.

"Mr. Graham never dines out without Lady Juliana, who of late, not being

in particular good health, usually prefers remaining at home; but her husband contrives to make up for the privation, by frequent morning visits, and some evening ones after Lady Juliana is retired to rest; for so large a lady, I suppose, requires a proportionate quantity of repose, and her regular quantum of bed is therefore twelve hours, which taste is however fortunate, for her husband, by that means, usually on a fine night, canters his pony up to Highwood, when his lady retires to her darling pillow. His conversation is delightful; so easy, so unassuming, so cheerful; yet not of such a kind as to put to flight all serious discourse: and then he has seen so much of the world, of all characters and societies; and he has so much information on all subjects, that dull indeed must be the person who found not his company agreeable. Mr.

Hervey said of him the other day, in the words of Madame de Sevigné, when describing her son—'*Il prend l'esprit des lieux où il est, et ne transporte de la cour et de la guerre dans cette solitude que ce qu'il en faut pour la conversation.*'

"Late in the afternoon he often appears at Highwood, and with Caroline and myself proses over the fire till dark; an event which brings Lord Delamore home, sends us to dress, and Graham to his own house, whence however he generally emerges in the evening.

"Mr. Markham, a neighbouring clergyman, who is very much here, plays at chess with Lord Delamore: whilst they are so engaged, Mr. Graham and Caroline sing duets with such perseverance, that I sometimes expect a summons from Lady Juliana to recall

her lord home; and perhaps it would be as well if she did; for then, and then only, do I see, that in Mr. Graham's manner (though I hate myself for the thought,) there is more of the lover than of the friend. Perhaps it is prudery that raises the idea in my mind, or ignorance: from not being a vocal performer, I know not the tenderness which singing requires; but yet I heard Mr. Graham and Miss D—— sing one of the same airs together; she has taste and science: but how different was the result! he sang the notes as before; but the life, the soul, had fled.

"Mr. Markham is a shrewd, observing man, and his eyes are more frequently drawn from the chess-board to the pianoforte, than I like; it is not with the eyes that music's charms are appreciated; and as to the ears, I have discovered that Mr. M. does not know one air from the

other. At supper the other night, after Graham had departed, he turned to Caroline, and fixing his little grey eyes on her face, said,—'Your Ladyship and Mr. Graham indulged us with some charming music to-night; beautiful words indeed; the poetry is every thing in music; and Mr. Graham pronounces Italian admirably, so distinct, with such expression! Guarini and Metastasio seemed to be your favourites this evening; and Mr. Graham did full justice to the lines addressed by the Poet to his beloved Nice:

'O Dio! chi sa fra tanti
Teneri omaggi e pianti
Oh Dio! chi sa se mai
Ti sovverai di me!'

"There was a somewhat in the way in which these lines were repeated which produced a smile from Lord Delamore's usually serious countenance; Caroline

tried to do the same, but blushed spite of herself; I sighed, and was happy to think that Mr. Graham had been absent in the North when Lord Dorset made a visit here a few weeks back. Jealousy is a great quickener of the faculties, and his lordship, though not naturally very penetrating, might have had eyes for what, rather than observe it, I often wish myself blind, deaf, or indifferent.

"We dine to-day at Branches: I shall conclude my letter on my return.

"Our dinner was very pleasant. and introduced me to three little beings of whom I had only before heard by report—the young Graham children. When I saw the lovely creatures hanging round their father's neck, so capable of loving and being loved, I did not think him so great an object of compassion as I had heretofore done. The

eldest boy, they say, is very like his grandfather Lord Howard; and I have also heard that that nobleman's death affected Lady Juliana but slightly, whilst his son-in-law, for a long while, deplored feelingly his loss; and it was at his instigation that an annuity settled upon two maiden aunts was more than doubled, contrary to Lady Juliana's wishes.

"Lady Juliana talks of being confined in London. I should not be sorry if she puts in execution her intentions—it will remove Graham for the time from the neighbourhood of Highwood.

My dear Aunt,

&c. &c. &c.

LUCY FITZ-EDWARD."

On the evening before Miss Fitz-Edward left Highwood, she accompanied her cousin into her dressing-room when they retired to rest, not for the

purpose, as may be supposed, of giving sage advice, but for saying those few more last words, which between intimate friends are always to be said, however much they have lately seen of each other. Lucy dared not utter the name of Graham, however she might desire it. It was, however, difficult to avoid doing so; and therefore, after a little talk, she rose to depart.

"Do not run away so soon," said Caroline, affectionately putting her arm round her neck; "I have not said one half of what I want to say to you—many a future night you may make up for your curtailed slumbers on this. You will not bring very dissipated habits to alarm Lady Mary with on your return: let me see,—but twice have we had any thing in the shape of a party in the house, and not once any thing in the shape of a lover. Well, I wish Mr.

Graham was not married, and he would do famously."

"To see you in such health and spirits is worth twenty lovers, so different from what you were . . . . ."

"In London, you mean?"

"No, at Delamore Castle, when I visited you after your marriage."

"I had reason then, for I was out of health, and, it matters not acknowledging it, disappointed: I was to blame, nevertheless; for, until Lord and Lady Delamore's death, I had no real cause for sorrow. Time, however, has reconciled me to a lot which, at one moment, I thought the most deplorable possible."

Whether just or not, Lucy did not wish to encourage her cousin in useless repinings, and answered laughingly—

"Very deplorable, truly!—Young, rich, handsome, a countess, married to a good-looking man, of unexceptionable

character, whom you preferred, and the conduct and disposition of whom could never give you a moment's uneasiness."

"Or a moment's pleasure. However, I do not mean to complain; I married Lord Delamore with my eyes open; I might have done worse."

"Much, much worse: you might have married a man of inferior understanding, whom you could not respect; how sad then would have been your fate!"

"As to that, I do not think it is your wise men that make the best husbands: a fool might be very amusing."

"But not according to your taste, Caroline; any more"—Lucy added, after a pause—"than Mr. Graham derives satisfaction from Lady Juliana's follies."

"Lady Juliana *loves*," answered Caroline with emphasis; "and, when that is the case, much may be forgiven. When

you marry, Lucy, take care that your husband has a heart."

"If ever I do, I will try to ascertain the fact."

"If ever you do? And why that *if*, Miss Lucy?"

"Why, in England, unmarried women are not so rare, that there would be any thing extraordinary in my forming one of the sisterhood."

"The sisterhood are not composed of women like you."

"You are partial, I know," said Lucy; "many, with far better pretensions than myself, in every respect, are not married, or likely to be so. The older we grow, the more fastidious do we become; and are most difficult to please, just at the moment when *prudence* should make one accept any offer one can get: the few civil words which win the heart at seventeen, are quite unheeded at seven-and-twenty."

"Well, you are not seven-and-twenty."

"But I have seen so much of the world, that I feel as if I were seven-and-forty."

"When you are, I will give you leave to be cruel; till then, I will have you do all the execution your eyes are capable of."

Lucy smiled, and promised obedience.

CHAPTER XVI.

Lady Juliana's caprices were not of such rare occurrence, that her husband was much surprised at her threat of being confined in London. He felt, however, some astonishment, and rather more than astonishment, sorrow, as the time drew nearer, and Lady Juliana's intentions were unaltered. At her desire, he wrote to inquire for a house, secretly hoping that none would be procured answering to the florid description she required.

In London, however, every thing may be had for money; a house was found, a

medical man engaged, and, to the horror of Mr. Graham, preparations were actually begun for their departure. Graham dared not remonstrate, for fear of betraying how dear to him the neighbourhood of Branches had become, and how painful to his feeling the quitting, two months earlier than was usual, her with whom alone he seemed to live. One or two delays did occur: two or three petty distresses, such as at another time would have fretted Lady Juliana into a nervous fever, now were treated with the most philosophical composure; and at length the day was fixed for their departure.

Had it been for his execution, Graham could not have looked forward to it with greater dismay: he now opened his eyes to the true state of his feelings. It was impossible for him any longer to deceive himself; the truth, the melancholy truth, was disclosed, and brought with

it all the misery which it could be supposed possible for a high-minded man to feel, whose every action and thought had ever been guided by an innate sense of honour and rectitude, from which no temptation could allure him; and who, having escaped the world's fiery ordeal, found in retirement, when apparently sheltered from the storm, a danger too fatal to his peace, perhaps to his honour!

It was a brilliant morning, early in March, when Graham conducted his lady to the carriage which awaited to convey her to a very different scene from that she was quitting. All nature smiled,—the birds, the flowers, all spoke of opening joys and renovated life; but they spoke in vain to one who had never viewed the lovely face of nature but with indifference; to whom the song of birds, and hues of flowers, were in vain created, as

though blindness and deafness had been her portion. She passed on complaining of some inattention in her maid, and entered her carriage to have her anger still more aroused by the packages within.

Graham was to follow Lady Juliana in a few days; and amidst the murmurs created by an extra bandbox, he was spared, if such were intended him, those expressions of tenderness which often burst from the lips of woman, in parting, for however short a time, with him she loves. The signal for departure was given, the impatient riders touched their no less impatient steeds, and the whole equipage vanished from sight. Lady Juliana's last words were lost in the air—they were more in anger than in sorrow. Little did Graham imagine, as the querulous note died on his ear, that it was the last sound of his wife's voice he

should ever hear—that they had parted for ever!

Mr. Graham had meditated of late upon the feasibility of his leaving England for a few years; and to ruminate on this scheme, he turned from his wife's carriage into the deep shade of an evergreen walk.

"Then," exclaimed Graham, as he wandered on, "I shall be spared the horrible conflict between love and duty, which rages within me; and if I be blamed for abandoning my wife, let it be also known that I shall leave the only being I love, or ever can love; without whom existence is a blank, with whom a crime.—Oh! my father, what have I not sacrificed to thee! domestic happiness—love! Alas! had I ever felt the reality of that passion, I had never dared take a woman to my arms, then indifferent, now..... Had such a

woman as Caroline crossed my path, had my warmest fancy pictured the loving or being loved by such as her, I would have suffered the extreme of poverty, I would have worked with my hands for bread, before I would have relinquished the prospect of the greatest good the world can give. And for what have I lost it?—for wealth which I despise."

At that moment a voice, of which Graham was beginning to abhor the sound, was heard, inquiring for him; and in another moment Lord Delamore appeared.

"Muttering your anguish to the winds of heaven at your lady's departure; for, I am sure I heard your voice, and did not dream to find you alone."

"You may have heard my voice, but the sense of my speech you are somewhat deficient in; you and I, Delamore,

are not very likely to break our hearts at parting with our wives for a few days," answered Graham, rather petulantly.

"Not precisely break our hearts, but custom does a great deal; what one is habituated to see one regrets, however unworthy such feeling; not that I mean to talk of Lady Juliana in such a light."

"Or Lady Delamore either, it is to be hoped," said Graham, contracting his brows.

"Oh, no! Caroline is very well; but, Graham, what ails you? are you ill? When you dine with us to-day, I shall make Caroline prescribe for you; she is supposed to kill or cure half the parish."

"She cannot cure me," sighed Graham.

"Oh, I am not serious; I have as great a horror of female doctoring as

you can have; but, however, I want you to be quite well the day after to-morrow, for Ongley has just been with me, and he says the hounds meet at Badby, on purpose to secure a good run for you, the last time of your being out this season."

Out of humour with himself and every thing else, Graham would gladly have dispensed with a mark of attention which constrained him to join in an amusement, which, however usually delightful to him, he now felt totally out of spirits for:—but he had no excuse to give for non-attendance, and was obliged, therefore, to mutter a few words of satisfaction at the arrangement.

Late in the afternoon of the following day, Graham found himself opposite the house at Highwood, and in a few minutes more at the door of the

apartment in which Caroline spent her mornings; another moment, and he was in her presence.

Lady Delamore was alone, and her occupation seemed to have been writing; but her thoughts had flown far away from her employment, her pen was in her hand, but her eyes were raised, and a tear still hung on their long lashes. "I was just thinking of you," she said, extending her hand to Graham.

"Tell me in what manner?" inquired he, drawing a chair to her side.

"Entirely and undividedly you were not the object of my thoughts. I was considering how little favourable an abode this huge world of ours is, for the growth and cultivation of friendship. Lovers meet and part no more, and perhaps are not the better for their good fortune: but the world and adverse fate are for ever at variance with simple friend-

ship: hardly is it formed, ere it withers, and perhaps dies. Need I explain to you, how you were connected with such thoughts? I have been so long accustomed to your society—so long used to open my heart to you, or what is more delightful, to have its secrets interpreted without the trouble of disclosure, that I know not how I shall reconcile myself to the change your absence will make; an absence which appears, in looking forward to it, as if it were to last for ever."

"And if it were for ever?" sighed Graham.

"Oh, Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Caroline earnestly.

"I have some thoughts of quitting Branches," continued Graham in a hurried voice. Caroline regarded him with surprise. He arose, and after taking one or two hasty turns in the room, resumed his seat, and fixing his

eyes mournfully on Lady Delamore's face—"I am miserable, wretched; I am resolved to leave England."

"Something has strangely disordered you this morning," said Caroline gently. "Leave England, indeed! what would Lady Juliana and the children think of becoming wanderers on the face of the earth?"

"I shall go alone."

"Alone! Leave Lady Juliana, and your dear affectionate children!"

"As to Lady Juliana, she will have her couch and her wealth to console her for my loss; the children will only act like the rest of the world,—forget me when no longer present."

"Why, you have assuredly taken a lesson of Lord Delamore this morning; that last speech was precisely in his style."

"I wish Delamore would give me a lesson in one respect."

"In what, pray ?"

"In his indifference to you."

Caroline started, and turning pale as death, remained silent.

"I suppose," said Graham, after a pause, "I have offended you irrevocably; nevertheless, I am glad I have avowed my feelings. Though now you may be angry, yet in time to come, you may pity me. I love you, Caroline; it is that which makes me miserable; it is that which will banish me from England. You need not upbraid me; I know all you would say: I know that the passion I feel for you is contrary to the laws of God and man,—that you are Delamore's wife,—that I am his friend; and considering me as such, you despise me for allowing warmer sentiments to intrude. This you

would tell me: answer me, I cannot bear your silence."

Caroline trembled. "How can I answer you? I cannot upbraid you.—Was not our friendship sufficient for happiness? why would you allow a feeling to enter which is . . . . . criminal?"

"Because," exclaimed Graham wildly, "my feelings and yours are very different: women are gentle, constant, tender, but not passionate; they are born for friendship,—men exist for love."

"For Heaven's sake!" said Caroline, the tears in her eyes, "do not reproach me for a coldness which, if it were otherwise, would render me unworthy in my own eyes, and in every one's else."

"Not in *every* one's else; not in *mine*, Caroline."

"Mr. Graham, you do not, cannot mean what you say?"

Graham blushed. "I will not add duplicity to my other faults; the words I have uttered are truly the thoughts of my heart—they are said: as it is the last time we may ever meet, perhaps you will forgive them; and when my deep offence is softened by time and absence, you may then pity your *friend*."

"What can you expect from me?" exclaimed Caroline, the colour rising to her face. "Have I not degraded myself sufficiently in your eyes?—have I not listened to a declaration which no married woman ought to listen to? Can it be *your* desire that I should have greater cause for self-reproach?"

"Self-satisfaction I would rather have you feel;" and Graham caught Lady Delamore's hand in his. "Yes, I would have you reflect, when I am far away, that you granted me your pity, and sof-

tened my banishment by the knowledge that I was, spite of all that prudery could urge, not indifferent to you."

"Leave me, Mr. Graham,—leave me, I implore."

"And will you not pronounce the little sentence I ask you? and must I add your unkindness to my other sorrows? What, in tears? Oh, Lady Delamore, forgive my impetuosity; pardon me, I beg, I beseech you; say you forgive me."

"On one condition," said Caroline faintly—"that if you leave England, you take Lady Juliana with you."

"For not being gifted with the insensibility of a stoic, I am willing to submit to penance, not martyrdom," answered Graham haughtily.

"Oh! Graham," said Caroline earnestly, "she must, she ought to go with you,—for my sake, I implore it. If I

were ever to see the slightest expression of sorrow on her countenance; if I ever were to hear the most distant report that she lamented your absence,—and how could she do otherwise?—never, oh! never could I forgive myself for being the fatal cause of your disunion."

"Then you would be more indulgent to *her* feelings than to *mine;* but do not, Caroline, render the task I have to perform more difficult of accomplishment than it is already. I shall leave England, perhaps Europe, for ever; or until such a time as age shall have cooled the fire now raging in my veins—when I may meet Delamore without a blush, yourself without feelings which make me forget honour, duty, all that renders a man noble and estimable upon earth."

Graham covered his face with his hands, to conceal the emotion he could not command. Caroline, thunderstruck

at his declaration, afflicted at his departure, and dismayed at his vehemence, remained motionless. She did not weep; she attempted to speak,—her words died on her lips,—a faint giddiness came over her. Graham observed the death-like paleness of her countenance; he rushed to her support; he held her in his arms; their cheeks met for a moment; the next she had rushed from the apartment, and Graham had quitted the house.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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